



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

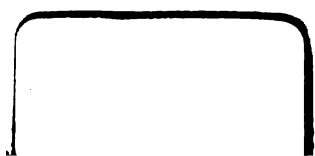
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



43. 1013.





43. 1013.









THE
BRITISH COMMENTARY

ON THE
HOLY GOSPELS:

COMPILED
CHIEFLY FROM THE WRITINGS OF
EMINENT BRITISH DIVINES.

BY THE
REV. J. E. RIDDLE, M.A.

Minister of St. Philip's Church, Leckhampton.

Author of "Ecclesiastical Chronology," "Christian Antiquities," "Sermons," "First Sundays at Church," "Luther and his Times," "Latin-English Dictionary," &c.



LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.
AND SOLD BY L. AND G. SEELEY.

PRINTED BY BINNS AND GOODWIN, BATH.

1843.



P R E F A C E.

THIS Commentary chiefly consists of a Series of Extracts from the practical and devotional writings of our most eminent Divines, together with a selection of appropriate Hymns, adapted to successive portions of the Holy Gospels, distinctly marked by division into sections.

The plan which I at first proposed was somewhat different, as may appear upon reference to the comments on the first few chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel ; but I speedily gave a preference to the form in which the bulk of the Commentary now exists, partly in compliance with the suggestions of friends who objected to the form of dialogue, and partly from my conviction that many portions of our sacred literature could be applied, in the way of a continuous comment, with far better effect than any remarks of mine. The selections which have been thus adapted and arranged constitute a compendium of practical British Divinity, as well as a comment on different portions of the sacred text ; and I believe it will be found that this volume contains the sentiments and reflections of our leading divines upon every subject of importance in matters of personal religion.

May all the readers of this Volume be enabled effectually to comply with that injunction of our Saviour, "Search the

Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John v. 39.

I take this opportunity of producing the sentiments of some of our most devout and enlightened writers on two subjects, at all times of deep importance, and well deserving of peculiar attention in the present day.

I. *The sufficiency of Holy Scripture as a rule of faith and duty.*

We ought to have the Holy Scriptures for the only rule of faith. When Paul made allegation for himself before Felix, the high-deputy, he did not extend his faith beyond the Word of God written: "Believing all things," saith he, "which are written in the law and the prophets;" making no mention of the rabbins. Moreover, "they have Moses and the prophets," saith Abraham in the parable; not their persons, but their writings. Also "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." And again, "Blessed are they which hear the Word of God." "The things which have not their authority of the Scriptures, may as easily be despised as allowed," saith Jerome.

"Therefore, whether it be of Christ, or of his Church, or of any other manner of thing which belongeth to our faith and life, I will not say if we," saith Augustine, ("who are not worthy to be compared to him that said 'if we,') but (that which also forthwith he addeth) if an angel from heaven shall teach anything besides that which ye have received in the Scriptures of the law and gospel, accursed be he."

But how are the Scriptures to be understood? Augustine answereth; giving this rule, "The circumstances of the Scrip-

tures," saith he, "lighten the Scriptures; and so one Scripture doth expound another, to a man that is studious, well willing, and often calling upon God in continued prayer, who giveth his Holy Spirit to them that desire it of him." So that the Scripture is not of any private interpretation at any time. For such a one, though he be a layman, fearing God, is much more fit to understand Holy Scripture, than any arrogant and proud priest, yea, than the bishop himself, be he never so great and glistering in all his pontificals.—But what is to be said of the Fathers? How are they to be esteemed? Augustine answereth, (Epist. xix. ad Hieron.), giving this rule also; that we should not therefore think it true because they say so, do they never so much excel in holiness or learning; but if they be able to prove their saying by the canonical Scriptures, or by good probable reason; meaning that to be a probable reason, as I think, which doth orderly follow upon a right collection and gathering out of the Scriptures.

Let the Papists go with their long faith; be you contented with the short faith of the saints, which is revealed unto us in the word of God written. Adieu to all Popish fantasies. Amen. For, one man, having the Scripture and good reason for him, is more to be esteemed himself alone, than a thousand such as they, either gathered together, or succeeding one another. The Fathers have both herbs and weeds; and Papists commonly gather the weeds, and leave the herbs.—HUGH LATIMER.

There is nothing laudable, nothing righteous, nothing honest or acceptable in God's sight, nothing to be done, for the which he hath not left in his Scriptures either some commandment, or some promise of reward, or some example. By his promises, by his threatenings, by his precepts, and through

the examples of godly men and women, we know good from evil; we know what is to be done, and what is to be left undone; what is to be praised, and what is to be dispraised; what delighteth and pleaseth, and what discontenteth and displeaseth, the Divine Majesty. God's book is no imperfect work, but a perfect book, containing all things to be done, the whole duty of a Christian man, and sufficient doctrine to instruct a God's-man in all good works, and to make him perfect: as St. Paul witnesseth, writing to Timothy. And he must needs accuse God either of ignorancy, or of folly, or of negligence, which saith that he hath left anything untouched and undeclared which concerneth a Christian man's office, and is needful and necessary unto salvation. All such things be expressed in God's book. For in the writing of the prophets he requireth the observation of his law only concerning religion; and he threateneth great plagues and grievous punishments to those that do add anything to his Word, that is, to those which teach any other doctrine, or any work to be necessary unto salvation, which is not commanded in his Word.—HUTCHINSON.

II. *The Word of God in Holy Scripture is the means or instrument of spiritual regeneration, and of the growth and increase of grace.*

The natural state of the soul is darkness, and the word, as a Divine light shining into it, transforms the soul into its own nature; so that as the word is called light, so is the soul that is renewed by it. "Ye were darkness, but now are ye," not only enlightened, but "light in the Lord," Eph. v. 8. All the evils of the natural mind are often comprised under the names of darkness and error; and therefore is the whole work of

conversion likewise signified by light and truth: "He begat us by the word of truth." James i. 8. So 2 Cor. iv. 6, alluding to the first *Fiat Lux*, or, "Let there be light," in the creation. The word, brought within the soul by the Spirit, lets it see its own necessity, and Christ's sufficiency, convinceth it thoroughly, and causeth it to cast over itself upon him for life: *and this is the very begetting of it again to eternal life.*

If we look more particularly into the strain and tenour of the word, it will appear most fit for *increasing the graces of the Spirit* in a Christian; for there are in it particular truths relative to them, that are apt to excite them, and set them on work, and so to make them grow, as all habits do, by acting. This it doth, both by particular exhortation to the study and exercise of those graces (sometimes pressing one, and sometimes another), and by right representing to them their objects. The word feeds *faith*, by setting before it the free grace of God, his rich promises, and his power and truth to perform them all; shews it the strength of the new covenant, *not depending upon itself*, but holding in Christ, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen; and drawing faith still to rest more entirely upon his righteousness. It feeds *repentance*, by making the vileness and deformity of sin daily more clear and visible. Still as more of the word hath admission into the soul, the more it hates sin, sin being the more discovered and the better known in its own native colour: as the more light there is in a house, the more anything in it that is uncleanly or deformed is seen and disliked. Likewise it increaseth *love to God*, by opening up still more and more of his infinite excellency and loveliness. As it borrows the resemblance of the vilest things in nature to express the foulness and hatefulness of sin, so all the beauties and dignities

that are in all the creatures are called together in the word, to give us some small scantling of that Uncreated Beauty, which alone deserves to be loved.—Thus might its fitness be instanced in respect to all other graces.

But, above all other considerations, this is observable in the word as the increaser of grace, that *it holds forth Jesus Christ to our view to look upon*, not only as the perfect pattern, but as the full fountain of all grace, from “whose fulness we all receive.” The contemplating of him as the perfect image of God, and then drawing from him as having in himself a treasure in us,—these give the soul more of that image in which consists truly spiritual growth. This the Apostle expresseth excellently, 2 Cor. iii. 18, speaking of the ministry of the Gospel revealing Christ, that, “beholding in him,” as it is, chapter iv. 6, “in his face,” “the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord:” not only that we may take the copy of his graces, but have a share of them.—LEIGHTON.

J. E. R.

CHELTENHAM,
December 26th, 1842.

THE
FAMILY READER
OF
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

S T. M A T T H E W ;

CONTAINING

A Familiar Exposition

OF THE

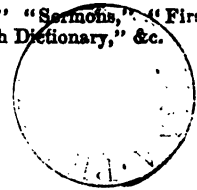
MORE DIFFICULT PASSAGES OF THE SACRED TEXT,

TOGETHER WITH

A PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY, CHIEFLY SELECTED
FROM THE WRITINGS OF EMINENT BRITISH DIVINES.

BY THE REV. J. E. RIDDLE,

Author of "Ecclesiastical Chronology," "Christian Antiquities," "Sermons," "First
Sundays at Church," "Luther and his Times," "Latin-English Dictionary," &c.



BATH :
BINNS AND GOODWIN.

LONDON :
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO. ; JAMES NISBET & CO. ;
AND WRIGHT, ALLIS, AND BAGNALL,
ALDINE CHAMBERS, PATERNOSTER ROW.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Compiler and Editor of "The Family Reader of the New Testament," desires to express his gratitude to the giver of all good for that measure of health and strength whereby he has been enabled to complete the Exposition of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. He now complies with the wishes of several friends in consenting to the publication of this portion of the Work as a separate and independent volume. Purchasers may be afterwards supplied with successive portions of the Commentary, either in Monthly Numbers, or in Annual Volumes, according to the progress of the work.



THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

S T. M A T T H E W.

§ I.

CHAP. I. 1.

THE book of the 'generation of Jesus Christ, ^b the son of David, ^c the son of Abraham.

^a Luke iii. 23. ^b Ps. cxviii. 11. Isa. xl. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5; ch. xxv. 42. John vii. 42. Acta ii. 30, & xiii. 23. Rom. i. 3. ^c Gen. xii. 3, & xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 16.

Reader. We are now about to begin our family reading of the New Testament, on a systematic plan; and I wish, at the outset, to describe to you the method which I have devised, with a view to derive and impart instruction from our study of this portion of the sacred volume. May our Divine Teacher be always present in the midst of us, to assist our feeble endeavours, to remove our ignorance, to give us a right understanding of his sacred word, and, above all, to endue us

with a teachable temper, a serious, humble, holy frame of mind!

Whenever we meet together for this purpose, I will begin by reading to you a portion of the sacred text, of such length as I may deem expedient. I will then make some remarks in explanation of the passage read, giving the interpretation of any difficult or obscure verses, and pointing out the connection and bearing of the whole, whenever such elucidation may seem necessary. But I do not intend to say all that may occur to my mind on the several subjects which will be brought before our notice; since I wish to leave room for your own inquiries, and to encourage a serious and lively conversation concerning the meaning and force of the successive portions of the sacred volume. I shall also occasionally take an opportunity of

ST. MATTHEW I. 1.

proposing questions, in order at once to ascertain your proficiency in biblical learning, and to direct your attention to points which may otherwise pass unobserved. I trust that this method will be at once agreeable and profitable to all parties. Perhaps some of you, for various reasons, will derive more benefit from listening to our dialogue, than from sharing in it; and, indeed, I think it best at once to name only two of you as parties, with myself, in the conversation which may thus arise. Let them be the eldest and the youngest of those now present;—*Theophilus*, whose name bears allusion to the love of God and divine things; and *Mary*, whose name may remind us of her who sat at her divine Master's feet, and listened to his words. If any other member of the family should wish to receive information concerning any particular passage or text about to be read, let the question be entrusted beforehand to one of those whose names I have mentioned, and by this means it will be regularly brought forward in due time.

At the close of each reading and conversation, I hope to be able to recite to you a Psalm or Hymn adapted to the subject in hand.

Let us now turn our attention to the passage which has just been read.

In the first verse, the great subject of the Gospel is brought before our view. When I read this introduction of the New Testament, I seem to hear the whole volume saying to me, in the language of St. Paul, "I determined not to know

anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Yes; Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, in his person, his work, his character, and his offices, forms the sum and substance of all that Evangelists or Apostles have left upon record for our learning. Let us lift up our hearts in gratitude, and say, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

The book of the generation, that is, as we should now say, the pedigree or genealogy, of *Jesus Christ*; the account of his ancestry, according to his human nature. I am aware that some commentators suppose that this verse is designed as a title to the whole Gospel, and not merely to the genealogical table which follows; understanding "the book of the generation" as denoting, according to a Hebrew idiom, "the history of the life and actions" of Jesus Christ. But I prefer the former interpretation.

The latter part of the first verse points out the design or use of the genealogy or pedigree which is here recorded. The object of the inspired writer was to prove, for the satisfaction of the Jews, and of all persons acquainted with ancient prophecy, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was proclaimed as the Messiah, was *the son*, i. e. descendant, of *David*, *the son*, i. e. descendant, of *Abraham*. "The design," says Matthew Henry, whose expositions and remarks I shall sometimes quote, "is to prove that our Lord Jesus Christ is the son of David, and the son of Abraham, and, therefore, of that nation and family out of which the Messiah

ST. MATTHEW 1. 1.

was to arise. Abraham and David were, in their day, the great trustees of the promise relating to the Messiah. The promise of the blessing was made to Abraham and his seed; of the dominion, to David and his seed; and they who would have an interest in Christ, as the son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are *to be blessed*, must be faithful, loyal subjects to him as the son of David, by whom all the families of the earth are *to be ruled*. It was promised to Abraham that Christ should descend from him (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 13), and to David, that he should descend from him (2 Sam. vii. 12; Ps. lxxxix. 3, &c.; cxxxii. 11); and, therefore, unless it can be proved that Jesus is a son of David, and a son of Abraham, we cannot admit him to be the Messiah."

Keep this in view, and you will feel convinced that the catalogue of names contained in this chapter is an important and valuable document, and not any vain or useless genealogy. Turn to your Bibles; and, in the passages which I will name, you will perceive with what reason the Jews expected that the Messiah would be the descendant of David and Abraham; and you will remark that they were accustomed to designate him by that appropriate appellation, "the Son of David."—Let Theophilus begin by reading Gen. xii. 3.

Theophilus. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Reader. Those words were addressed to Abraham; and they are

repeated in Gen. xxii. 18.; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.—Read Gal. iii. 16.

Theophilus. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

Reader. How important then to show that, according to his human nature, Jesus, the Messiah, was a descendant of Abraham!—Read Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4.

Theophilus. "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant. Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations."

Reader. And Psalm cxxxii. 11.

Theophilus. "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."

Reader. Look now at the writings of prophets who lived after the time of David.—Read Isa. xi. 1.

Theophilus. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

Reader. Why is it said, out of the stem and roots of Jesse?

Theophilus. Because Jesse was the father of David.

Reader. Right.—Read Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

Theophilus. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby

ST. MATTHEW I. 1.

he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Reader. And you will find nearly the same words in Jer. xxxiii. 15. It is remarkable that Ezekiel prophecies of Christ under the very name of David.—Read chap. xxxiv. 23, 24.

Theophilus. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it."

Reader. And to the same effect is Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 25. With all these verses compare now Acts xiii. 23.

Theophilus. "Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."

Reader. How faithful to his word is God! How beautiful the harmony of Scripture! Let me prove to you, in the next place, that the title "Son of David" was commonly applied, by the Jews and others, to the Messiah, either expected or acknowledged.—Read Matt. xv. 22.

Theophilus. "Behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David."

Reader. And Matt. xx. 30.

Theophilus. "Behold, two blind men, sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David."

Reader. And the ninth verse of the next chapter.

Theophilus. "The multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosannah to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosannah in the highest."

Reader. All these people intended to express their belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, by the very title with which they saluted him. May we always lift up our hearts in sincerity and faith whenever we utter that fervent petition, "O Son of David, have mercy upon us!"—Mary, do you remember any occasion on which our blessed Saviour referred to this title, in his conversation with the Jews?

Mary. Yes. Our Lord once referred to it, with a view to silence the captious questions of the Jews; and to direct attention to the union of the divine nature with the human in his own glorious person. I read the history as it stands in St. Luke's Gospel. "He said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? And David himself saith in the Book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?"

Reader. St. Matthew tells us that "no man was able to answer him a word." So true it is that when men do not choose to be convinced of divine truth in general, or of any portion of divine truth in particular, the Bible presents many difficulties to their minds, which they cannot

ST. MATTHEW I. 1.

fairly surmount.—But how would you answer our Saviour's question, Theophilus?

Theophilus. Jesus Christ was the son of David, according to his human nature; but he was the Lord of David, even when David wrote, inasmuch as he was the eternal Son of God,—the Word who “was in the beginning with God,” and who “was God.”

Reader. True. Well may we be reminded of that expression of St. Paul (Rom. ix. 5), “Whose are the fathers,”—such as Abraham and David,—“and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” “Whose goings forth,” to use the noble language of the inspired Micah (v. 2), “have been from of old, from everlasting.”

It should be borne in mind also, that when the Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of as the son of David, he is presented to our notice chiefly in his exalted character of the king or head of his people. When the heavenly messenger proclaimed to the Virgin Mary the honour which she was about to receive in giving birth to the expected Messiah, he finished his salutation by applying to our blessed Lord a portion of an illustrious prophecy which had been delivered by Isaiah (ch. ix.), wherein the Redeemer is described as being at once the Son of the Highest, and the Son of David, and as being established in the possession of an endless dominion. “He shall be great, and shall be called *the Son of the Highest*; and the Lord God shall give unto him

the throne of *his father David*; and he shall reign over the house of David for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke i. 32, 33.

We must content ourselves, at present, with the reading and examination of the single verse which has thus occupied our thoughts. But we shall derive no small degree of profit from the consideration of these few words, if we have been hereby assisted in forming any correct idea of the greatness and glory of our Saviour's person, and the honours of his mediatorial kingdom. Let me exhort you to direct your minds, especially, to the contemplation of the wonderful constitution of our Saviour's person, who is at once the Lord and the son of David, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, “the root and the offspring of David.” Rev. xxii. 16. Think of him as “God manifest in the flesh,”—so constituted that in him “two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man.” Think of him as that glorious Being to whom the Lord has said, “Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” And, before we part, let me remind you that this subject, the glory of Christ, in his person and in his office, is one of the most important and most salutary which you will find in the whole compass of the word of revelation. Let it be one leading desire of your hearts, while we are engaged in our

ST. MATTHEW I. 1.

proposed study of the New Testament, to behold here "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." May we be enabled truly to behold "his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father," and may we know him to be "full of grace and truth."

In conclusion, I read to you a few lines from the pen of an old writer, containing some sentiments on this point which I wish to leave upon your minds. "Alas," says he, "after our utmost and most diligent inquiries, we must say, how little a portion of him is it that we can understand! His glory is incomprehensible, and his praises are unutterable. An illuminated mind may conceive something of it; but what we can express, in comparison of what it is in itself, is even less than nothing. But as for those who have forsaken the only true guide herein, endeavouring to be wise above what is written, and to raise their contemplations, by fancy and imagination, above Scripture revelation (as many have done), they have darkened counsel without knowledge, uttering things which they understand not, which have no substance or spiritual food of faith in them.

"Howbeit, that real view which we may have of Christ and his glory, in this world, by faith, however weak and obscure, and that knowledge which we may obtain of them, by divine revelation, is inexpressibly to be preferred above all other wisdom, understanding, or knowledge whatever. So it is declared by him, who will be acknowledged a competent

judge in these things: 'yea, doubtless,' saith he, 'and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' Phil. iii. 8. He who doth not so, hath no part in him.

"The revelation made of Christ in the blessed Gospel is far more excellent, more glorious, and more filled with rays of divine wisdom and goodness, than the whole creation and the just comprehension of it, if attainable, can contain or afford. Without the knowledge hereof, the mind of man, however priding itself in other inventions and discoveries, is wrapped up in darkness and confusion.

"This, therefore, deserves the severest of our thoughts, the best of meditations, and our utmost diligence in them. For, if our future blessedness shall consist in being where he is, and beholding his glory, what better preparation can there be for it, than in a constant previous contemplation of that glory, in the revelation that is made in the Gospel, that, by a view of it, we may be gradually transformed into the same glory."

PSALM LXXXIX.

For ever shall my song record
The truth and mercy of the Lord;
Mercy and truth for ever stand,
Like heaven, establish'd by his hand.

Thus to his Son he sware, and said,
"With thee my covenant first is made;
In thee shall dying sinners live;
Glory and grace are thine to give.

Be thou my Prophet, thou my Priest;
Thy children shall be ever blest;
Thou art my chosen King; thy throne
Shall stand 'eternal, like my own.

There's none of all my sons above,
So much my image or my love ;
Celestial powers thy subjects are,
Then what can earth to thee compare ?

David, my servant, whom I chose
To guard my flock, to crush my foes,
And rais'd him to the Jewish throne,
Was but a shadow of my Son."

Now let the church rejoice and sing,
Jesus her Saviour and her King,
Angels his heavenly wonders show,
And saints declare his works below.

WATTS.

§ II.

CHAP. I. 2—17.

The Genealogy of Christ from Abraham to Joseph.

2 'Abraham begat Isaac ;
and 'Isaac begat Jacob ; and
'Jacob begat Judas and his
brethren ;

3 And 'Judas begat Phares
and Zara of Thamar ; and
'Phares begat Esrom ; and Es-
rom begat Aram ;

4 And Aram begat Amina-
dab ; and Aminadab begat Naas-
son ; and Naasson begat Sal-
mon ;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of
Rachab ; and Booz begat Obed
of Ruth ; and Obed begat Jes-
se ;

6 And 'Jesse begat David the
king ; and 'David the king be-
gat Solomon of her *that had been*
the wife of Urias ;

7 And 'Solomon begat Ro-

boam ; and Roboam begat Abia ;
and Abia begat Asa ;

8 And Asa begat Josophat ;
and Josophat begat Joram ; and
Joram begat Ozias ;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham ;
and Joatham begat Achaz ; and
Achaz begat Ezekias ;

10 And "Ezekias begat Ma-
nasses ; and Manasses begat
Amon ; and Amon begat Jo-
sias ;

11 And || "Josias begat Je-
chonias and his brethren, about
the time they were 'carried
away to Babylon :

12 And after they were
brought to Babylon, 'Jechonias
begat Salathiel ; and Salathiel
begat 'Zorobabel ;

13 And Zorobabel begat A-
biud ; and Abiud begat Eliakim ;
and Eliakim begat Azor ;

14 And Azor begat Sadoc ;
and Sadoc begat Achim ; and
Achim begat Eliud ;

15 And Eliud begat Eleazar ;
and Eleazar begat Matthan ; and
Matthan begat Jacob ;

16 And Jacob begat Joseph
the husband of Mary, of whom
was born Jesus, who is called
Christ.

17 So all the generations
from Abraham to David *are*
fourteen generations ; and from
David until the carrying away
into Babylon *are* fourteen ge-

nerations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

d Gen. xxi. 2, 3. *e* Gen. xxv. 26. *f* Gen. xxix. 35.—*g* Gen. xxxviii. 27. *h* Ruth iv. 18, &c. *i* Chr. ii. 8, 9, &c.—*j* 1 Sam. xvi. 1, & xvii. 12. *k* 2 Sam. xii. 24.—*l* 1 Chr. iii. 10, &c.—*m* 2 Kin. xx. 21. *n* 1 Chr. iii. 13.—*o* Some read—*Josias begat Jakim, and Jakim begat Jechonias.* *p* See 1 Chr. iii. 15, 16. *q* 2 Kin. xxiv. 14, 15, 16, & xxv. 11. *r* 2 Chr. xxxvi. 10, 20. *s* Jer. xxvii. 20, & xxxix. 9, & lxi. 11, 15, 28, 29, 30. *t* Dan. i. 2.—*u* 1 Chr. iii. 17, 19. *v* Ezra iii. 2, & v. 2. *w* Neh. xii. 1. *x* Hag. i. 1.

Reader. In these verses I find little occasion for verbal explanation. Perhaps, however, your acquaintance with Old Testament history may suggest some inquiries respecting the individuals mentioned in this genealogy, and the order of their succession.

Theophilus. Is Ozias, in the eighth verse, the same as Uzziah, of whom we read in 2 Chron. xxvi. 2?

Reader. Yes; this is the same Uzziah, whose history stands upon record as a warning against a proud neglect, or violation, of divine institutions and appointments. He reigned well, for some time, and prospered; but afterwards, “when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.” This was a bold and arrogant invasion of the priests’ office; and Uzziah was smitten with leprosy as a punishment for his presumption.

Theophilus. But it is said that Joram begat Ozias; whereas the father of Ozias was Amaziah, and the father of Amaziah was Joash, and the father of Joash was Ahaziah, and it is he who was the son of Joram.

Reader. True; the three more

immediate descendants of Joram, namely, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, are omitted; and the words “Joram begat Ozias,” are equivalent to “Joram was the ancestor of Ozias,” just as the phrase “son of David” is the same as “descendant of David.” This manner of speaking was common among the Jews. Perhaps the omission existed in the genealogical table from which St. Matthew took his account; and the Evangelist saw no occasion to supply the deficiency; especially as it did not affect his argument, the line of succession being unbroken. It must also be borne in mind that Joram married wicked Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, from whom the succeeding sovereigns descended; and, perhaps, the omission of three names in the genealogy is designed as a mark of disgrace “to the third and fourth generation,” in token of the Lord’s displeasure against Joram on account of his connection with an impious and idolatrous house, and because “he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord.”

Theophilus. I find also a little difficulty in the eleventh verse, where it is said that Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren. If I remember rightly, Josias was the father of Jehoiakim; and Jehoiakim was the father of Jechonias. Besides this, we do not read of the brethren of Jechonias, but we do read of those of Jehoiakim, in the Old Testament. So that I should have expected to find, “Josias begat Jehoiakim and his brethren, and Jehoiakim begat Jechonias.”

Reader. Exactly so; and if you refer to the margin of your Bible, you will discover an allusion to a reading found in many manuscripts, which some critics adopt as genuine,—"Josias begat Jakim (i.e. Jehoiakim), and Jakim begat Jechonias." Calmet accordingly would read the eleventh and twelfth verses thus,— "Josias begat Jehoiakim and his brethren; and Jehoiakim begat Jechonias about the time of the first Babylonish captivity; and Jechonias begat Salathiel, after they were brought to Babylon." Others, receiving the reading adopted in our text, avoid the difficulty by supposing Jechonias, in the eleventh verse, to be only another form of the name Jehoiakim. Or again, allowing a certain latitude of expression not uncommon in such cases in Jewish writings, some would understand the eleventh verse thus, Josias begat, i.e. was the ancestor, namely, the grandfather, of Jechonias and his brethren, i.e. his relatives, namely, his uncles.—In either way, the agreement of the genealogy with the history becomes easily apparent.

Theophilus. We read, in the twelfth verse, that Jechonias begat Salathiel; whereas it is said concerning Jechonias, in Jeremiah xxii. 30, "write this man childless;" and St. Luke speaks of Salathiel as being the son of Neri.

Reader. The whole prophecy to which you refer is as follows, "Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the

throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." Now some suppose that Salathiel, and others who are mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 17, 18, were really the sons of Jechonias; and that the prophecy was fulfilled in the calamities which befel their house, and in its loss of the throne. None of the posterity of Jechonias sat upon the throne of David; but yet the regal line was continued from that prince, through his son Salathiel. Interpreters who take this view of the matter conjecture that Salathiel was adopted by Neri.—On the other hand, some suppose that Jechonias was the father of Salathiel only by adoption, the latter being really the son of Neri, who was the heir of Zedekiah, brother of Jehoiakim, and uncle of Jechonias.

Theophilus. My recollection of the history of Jehoiakim and Jechonias, and their lives, is rather indistinct. Perhaps this is owing to the similarity of the two names, and the confusion of events at that period.

Reader. It occurred to me that a little historical information on this point would be acceptable; and I have brought out of my library a volume of Doddridge's Expositor, in order to read to you the following note in which you will find a clear account of the succession of Jewish princes, and other circumstances, about the time of the captivity.

"On the death of Josiah, the people took Jehoahaz, otherwise called Shallum, though a younger brother, and made him king in his father's stead (2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31); but Pharaoh Necho, in three months'

time deposed him, and carried him captive to Egypt, according to the prediction of the prophet concerning him (Jer. xxii. 10—12, compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 33, 34), and having thus deposed him, he made Jehoiakim, the elder brother, who was formerly called Eliakim, king in his room. But this Jehoiakim was soon subdued by the king of Babylon," Nebuchadnezzar, "who, after his conquest, suffered him for a while to continue on the throne; but, on his revolt to the king of Egypt again, he was slain by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxiv. 1, 2), and thrown out unburied, as Josephus tells us, agreeably to what the prophet had foretold (Jer. xxii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 30)." I would here observe, that, at the period of this conquest in the reign of Jehoiakim, many of the Jews were led away captive to Babylon; and this may be regarded as *the first* captivity. "After Jehoiakim's death, his son Jehoiachin, by some called Jehoiakim the second, was put in his place; and this is he who is elsewhere called Jeconiah (1 Chron. iii. 16), and Coniah (Jer. xxii. 24). But, after a reign of three months, he was taken captive and imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxiv. 8—16), according to the prophecy, Jer. xxii. 24—26, and after thirty-seven years released (2 Kings xxv. 27)." This captivity under Jehoiachin may be reckoned as *the second*. When Jeconiah was deposed and carried captive, "his uncle Zedekiah, the third son of Josiah, was raised to the throne; but, after a reign of eleven years, his eyes were put out,

and he was carried captive to Babylon, Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed (2 Kings xxiv. 17, 18; xxv. 7)." The last-mentioned was *the third*, and final, Babylonian captivity.

Theophilus. I hope I shall have a more distinct remembrance of these events, in future. I now understand the narrative very clearly.

Reader. Some persons have imagined a difficulty in verse 12, where none exists; regarding Zorobabel, who is there named, as the son of Pedaiah, mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 19. But that Zorobabel was another person. The celebrated Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel or Salathiel, as here stated.—The whole pedigree here recorded is, doubtless, such as was found in the Jewish genealogical tables; and it does not appear that the Jews, although violently opposed to Christianity, ever charged the Evangelists with inaccuracy in this particular.

Many are the reflections which may arise when we consider the different characters and condition of the various individuals who are numbered among our Saviour's earthly ancestors. Some of those persons were illustrious saints, patterns of faith, obedience, and holy consistency of conduct; men whose lives demand our imitation, and whose example may animate our courage.—Others were sinners, who died, we fear, in a state of impenitence and unbelief; and from these men's history we may derive a solemn warning. While their names are included in the Saviour's genealogy, their souls, we

fear, are lost; and thus it is still very possible to hear the Saviour's name, and to profess an outward and formal relation to his church, without being indeed partakers of the blessings of his salvation.—Here we find also that royal penitent, David, the man after God's own heart, who fell into sin, but, having deeply repented of his offence, was mercifully forgiven. His history, in this instance, forms a most instructive comment on his own words, at the beginning of the 32nd Psalm, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."—All the males who are mentioned in the genealogy, were, of course, Jews; but, while we observe the names of some Gentile women inscribed in the list, we cannot but be reminded of the delightful truth that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, and that nations who were once accounted strangers to the covenant of promise have been mercifully admitted to the citizenship of the saints.—Oh that each of our names may hereafter be found written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life!

Theophilus. The pedigree before us is evidently that of Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary. But, since Joseph was not the father of Jesus, of what value is this genealogy in proving his descent from Abraham and David?

Reader. The Jews reckoned their genealogies only by the males; so that, in order to know to what tribe

any one belonged, they did not ask who was his mother, but who was his father. And hence it was quite necessary for the satisfaction of the Jews, to prove that *the reputed and legal* father of our Lord was of the line of Abraham and David.—Besides this, you will remember that Mary was of the family of David, in another branch, as appears from the genealogy recorded by St. Luke. It is probable that Heli was really the father of Mary, and became the father of Joseph only by adoption, upon his espousal to his daughter.—Can you refer me to a passage of this Gospel which may suggest to us the way in which we may possess a more honourable and blessed relation to Jesus, than such as belonged to those who were merely his kindred according to the flesh?—Read the passage, if you remember to which I allude. May the blessedness therein described be our own!

Theophilus. "While yet he talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Matt. xii. 46—50.

Reader. What is the meaning of the term Christ, or The Christ, which,

as we are reminded in the sixteenth verse, is emphatically appropriated to our blessed Saviour? And to what Hebrew word does it correspond?

Theophilus. Christ is a Greek word, meaning *The Anointed One*, and is the same as *The Messiah* in Hebrew.

Reader. Can you tell me what official persons were anointed among the Jews, at the time of their admission to office, or consecration?

Theophilus. Prophets, priests, and kings.

Reader. And what was the signification of this ceremony?

Theophilus. It was an emblem of the communication of authority, and of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

Reader. True. And therefore when our Saviour is called the Messiah or the Christ, we are reminded that he has been appointed and qualified to act as the prophet, priest, and king of his church. "As no man was ever dignified by holding the three offices, so no person ever had the title of Messiah, the Anointed One, but Jesus, the Christ. He alone is King of kings and Lord of lords: *the king* who governs the universe and rules in the hearts of his followers; *the prophet*, to instruct men in the way wherein they should go; and the great *high priest*, to make atonement for their sins," and to plead for them in heaven.

Let us thankfully acknowledge and submit to him in these high offices, to our eternal welfare: and as Christians,—those who, through divine mercy, have ourselves received

the anointing of the Holy Spirit, according to our measure,—may we walk worthy of our high vocation, and be finally made partakers of all the blessings of redemption!

HYMN.

Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes from thickest fogs of vice
To clear the mental ray,
And on the eye-balls of the blind,
To pour celestial day.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure;
And with the treasures of his grace
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad Hosannahs, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.

OLNEY H.

§ III.

CHAP. I. 18—25.

Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, when she was espoused to Joseph. The angel satisfieth the misdeeming thoughts of Joseph, and interpreteth the names of Christ.

18 ¶ Now the 'birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child 'of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband,

being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: "for that which is † conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name || JESUS: for ' he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and || they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife :

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth "her first-born son; and he called his name JESUS.

The Fifth Year before the Common Account called Anno Domini.— Luke i. 27. * Luke i. 35.—† Dent. xiv. 1.—" Luke i. 35. † Gr. *begotten*.—" Luke i. 31. † That is, *Saviour*, Heb. y Acts iv. 12, & v. 31, & xiii. 23, 24.—‡ Is. vii. 14.—§ Or, *his name shall be called*.—* Ex. xiii. 2. Luke ii. 7, 21.

Reader. We have here a brief notice of some circumstances attending the miraculous birth of our blessed

Saviour; and express allusion to some of his most significant names. I will make a few remarks on the conduct and character of Joseph and Mary; and we will then consider more at length the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, and the meaning of the names here given to our Lord.

Mary was espoused or betrothed, as was usual among the Jews, some time before she was taken home by Joseph, to live with him as his wife. This contract was binding upon both parties, who, in the eye of the law, were already regarded as married persons; so that, in case of separation, a formal divorce had now become as necessary as it would have been at any subsequent period. And hence we find that Joseph is already styled the husband of Mary, and Mary the wife of Joseph.

Now Joseph, *being a just man*, that is, as we should say, being a good man, kind, considerate, and merciful, and therefore,—or, being a strict observer of the law, and yet,—not willing to expose Mary to infamy by a public accusation, was disposed to put her away privily; that is, to give her a writing of divorce in the presence of two witnesses, without assigning any reason. But even this he would not do without much deliberation, including, no doubt, prayer for divine direction. *He thought on these things*, we are told; he gave them an attentive consideration before he would venture to act.

The conduct of Joseph, in this difficult affair, contains many particulars which deserve our imitation. I will thank Theophilus to read a

passage in Henry, on the nineteenth verse, which I have marked with pencil.

Theophilus.—"It becomes us, in many cases, to be gentle towards those that come under suspicion of having offended, to hope the best concerning them, and make the best of that which at first appears bad, in hope that it may prove better." And again; "The necessary censures of those who have offended ought to be managed without noise;—Christian love and Christian prudence will hide a multitude of sins, and great ones, as far as may be done without having fellowship with them."

Reader. Read the same author's remarks on the words *While he thought on these things.*

Theophilus. "Those who would have direction from God must think on things themselves, and consult with themselves. It is the thoughtful, not the unthinking, whom God will guide."

Mary. May I be allowed to ask whether you think that this history encourages us to regard our own dreams as containing prophetic hints, or conveying supernatural information?

Reader. Certainly not. The dreams by which God made known his will, or sent messages, to his ancient prophets and people, were different from any which may occur to ourselves, especially inasmuch as they were accompanied by some certain evidence of their divine origin and authority. While, therefore, we read of this ancient mode of revelation with reverence and thankful-

ness, we are yet by no means encouraged to attach any undue importance, or to affix any mysterious meaning, to our own common dreams. Let us be content to be guided by the leadings of Providence, the dictates of conscience, the advice of prudent friends, and our own careful deliberations, in subordination to the general rules of God's written word.

Theophilus. It must have been a great consolation to Joseph to hear the angel say, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife."

Reader. Yes;—and a great cause of thankfulness to that gracious Being who had so seasonably relieved him from his perplexity. There is also something very encouraging and delightful in the vindication of Mary's innocence. "Those who take care to keep a good conscience may cheerfully trust God with the keeping of their good names, and have reason to hope that he will clear up, not only their integrity, but their honour, as the sun at noon day."

I will now ask, have you any question to propose in connection with the history before us?

Theophilus. The infant Saviour is spoken of, in the last verse, as Mary's *first-born son*. Had Mary any other children afterwards?

Reader. We do not know; nor is the question of any importance. Some of the early Christian writers, falling into their very common error of seeming to be wise above what is written, affirm very confidently that Mary had no other children; and it was once a fashion among some peo-

ple to be very angry with those who maintained the contrary supposition. But the truth is, that the fact is neither affirmed nor denied in Scripture, and that we have no means of correct information concerning it. When it is said that Jesus was Mary's first-born son, that expression implies no more than that she had no child before his birth.

Let me now direct your attention to the remarkable and important prophecy quoted in the twenty-third verse.—In what part of the Old Testament do we find it?

Theophilus. In the seventh chapter of Isaiah.—We there learn that Ahaz, king of Judah, was troubled with fear of Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, who had advanced, with their combined forces, against Jerusalem. Isaiah was commissioned to declare, in the name of God, that their attempt should fail.

Ahaz was encouraged to ask a sign in confirmation of this prophecy; and when he had refused to do so, the prophet said, "Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know how to refuse the evil, and to choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

Reader. Do you clearly under-

stand that prophecy and its application?

Theophilus. The application to the Messiah, as made by the Evangelist, is strikingly evident and easy; but when I read the whole passage in Isaiah, I cannot exactly understand how the prophecy of Christ was a sign to Ahaz, or how the two verses following the one quoted by St. Matthew can apply to Christ at all.

Reader. It is clear from the expression, "all this was done *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken by the Lord," that St. Matthew is indeed explaining and applying a prophecy,—not merely accommodating to his purpose a passage of Scripture otherwise unconnected with the subject. But, this being allowed, you ask, how could the declaration of Isaiah be a particular sign of the deliverance of Jerusalem in the time of Ahaz, as well as a prophecy of the still greater, but more remote, event, the birth of the Messiah? Interpreters give more than one answer to this inquiry.

The prophecy, say some, had a twofold signification; referring, in the first instance, to an event about to take place in the time of Ahaz; and also, in a higher sense, to the more distant and more important event, the birth of Messiah. They think it probable that Isaiah referred to some virgin then about to be married, perhaps to himself, and declared that after her marriage she would give birth to a son, who would be no more than a mere infant when Syria and Samaria should

be overthrown; and who should be named Immanuel, in token of the presence of God among his people, pleading their cause, and defeating their enemies. This was the sign to Ahaz and the men of his day. But it was also a type or pattern of a still greater event, even the future birth of the Messiah from a virgin, in an unprecedented and miraculous manner, who should be, in the full sense of the expression, God with us, God united to our own nature, and dwelling in the world.

Other commentators, however, reject this interpretation, as being unnecessarily complex, and at the same time low and unworthy of the subject. They think that the prophecy related primarily and entirely to Christ, without any other allusion whatever. And, say they, the promise of a future Messiah became a sign to Ahaz, inasmuch as it implied the continual preservation of his family, from which, according to promise, the Messiah was to spring. Perhaps this view of the prophecy is most approved, and most commonly adopted. And, in order that you may completely understand it, I will read to you a passage from a commentator on Isaiah, by whom it is strenuously defended. "What reference," says he, "had the birth of Christ to the present circumstances of the king and people of Judea? Or what had this sign to do with their deliverance from the kings of Israel and Syria? I answer, that this sign was given not to Ahaz, or to any of the rebellious unbelieving Jews, for they could not appreciate it; but to the faithful

few who still remained, and to whom the prophet now chiefly directed his discourse. His words may thus be paraphrased:—'Since the king has refused the sign offered to him, Jehovah himself shall give you a sign, not which you shall behold with your eyes, or hear with your ears, but which, to those among you who have any real faith in his word, and any confidence in me, his prophet, will be more satisfactory than any other. In token, then, that the house of David shall not now be utterly destroyed, but that God will fulfil the promise he once made to Judah, that the sceptre should not depart from his posterity till the coming of Messiah, and to David; that his throne should be established for ever, Behold, at some future period, a virgin of David's house shall conceive, and bring forth a son, whom she will call by a name significative of his divine and human nature.' Now, to those who believed, this would be a sufficient assurance that the attempt of Rezin and Pekah to dethrone Ahaz, and set up one of another nation in his stead, would be fruitless. For how could this sign be accomplished if the family of David were destroyed?"

In this case, the following words of the prophet, *Butter and honey shall he eat, &c.*, denote that the Messiah, although God with us, should yet, at the same time, be truly man, and, as such, should pass through the various stages of childhood, "growing in wisdom and stature." And the child mentioned in the sixteenth verse is not Immanuel, but

Shear-Jashub, the prophet's own son, whom, according to divine command, he had taken with him into the presence of Ahaz.

When it is said they shall call his name Immanuel, what is implied and meant?

Theophilus. That he should really be what the name denotes; namely, God with us.

Reader. True; it was common among the Jews, especially in prophetic writings, to say that a thing *should be called so or so*, meaning that it *should really be of such or such a character or quality*. I will not weary you with references to prove this point; but I must request you to compare Matt. xxi. 13, with Luke xix. 46.

Theophilus. Matt. xxi. 13, "It is written, My house *shall be called* the house of prayer."—Luke xix. 46, "It is written, My house *is* a house of prayer."

Reader. Let our thoughts dwell, for a few moments, upon the meaning and power of this name, *Immanuel*, most holy and reverend, and full of consolation to ourselves.—*God with us*;—that is, says Baxter, "God taking our nature, appearing to us, and reconciling and bringing us to himself."—"A mysterious name, but very precious. God *incarnate* among us, and so God *reconcilable* to us; at peace with us, and taking us into covenant and communion with himself. The people of the Jews had God with them, in type and shadow, dwelling between the cherubim; but never so as when 'the Word was made flesh,'—that was the blessed *Shechinah*.

D

What a happy step is hereby taken toward the settling of a peace between God and man, that the two natures are thus brought together in the person of the Mediator! Behold in this the deepest mystery, and the richest mercy, that ever was. By the light of *nature*, we see God as a *God above us*; by the light of *the law*, we see him as a *God against us*; but by the light of *the Gospel*, we see him as Immanuel, *God with us*, in our nature, and (which is more) in our interest." (M. H.)

When the angel announced to Joseph the approaching birth of this divine Redeemer, he said, "thou shalt call his name *JESUS*, for he shall save his people from their sins." What is the precise meaning of that name which has now become so sacred?

Theophilus. You have sometimes told me that it is the same as Joshua, and means a *Saviour or Deliverer*; or rather, *Jehovah the Saviour*, since the name was formed by prefixing to Hosea the first syllable of the name *Jehovah*. Numb. xiii. 16.

Reader. True. Can you tell me what remarkable persons, bearing that name, are mentioned in the Old Testament?

Theophilus. Joshua, the successor of Moses, the captain of the Israelites at their first settlement in Canaan; and another, who was their high priest on their return from the Babylonian Captivity. Zech. vi. 11, 12.

Reader. Let us thankfully regard Christ as the true Joshua;—being at once the Captain of our salvation,

17

ST. MATTHEW II. 1—3.

and the High Priest of our profession, and in both ways our Saviour.

He shall save his people from their sins. Here we perceive the glory and perfection of the Gospel. The great Deliverer whom it reveals is one who both atones for sin and destroys it;—one who saves his people from its guilt, its pollution, and its power. “Those whom Christ saves he saves from their sins; from the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, from the dominion of sin by the Spirit of his grace. In saving them from sin, he saves them from wrath and the curse, and all misery both here and hereafter. Christ came to save his people, not in their sins, but from their sins; to purchase for them, not a liberty to sin, but a liberty from sin, to redeem them ‘from all iniquity’ (Tit. ii. 14); and so to redeem them ‘from among men’ (Rom. xiv. 4) to himself, who is ‘separate from sinners.’ So that those who leave their sins, and give up themselves to Christ as his people, are interested in the Saviour, and in the great salvation which he has ‘wrought out.’” —Let us practically remember this great and consolatory truth.

HYMN.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.
It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.
Jesus, my Saviour, Shepherd, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
O Lord, my life, my way, my end,
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the memory of thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

NEWTON.

(See Phil. ii. 9—11.)

§ IV.

CHAP. II. 1—3.

The wise men of the East are directed to Christ by a star.

Now when “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men ^b from the east to Jerusalem,

2 Saying, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen ^dhis star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

^a Luke ii. 4, 6, 7. ^b Gen. x. 30, & xxv. 6. ¹ Kings, iv. 30.—^c Luke ii. 11. ^d Numb. xxiv. 17. Is. lx. 3.

Reader. Our attention is here called to the time of our Saviour's nativity—and the remarkable journey of certain wise men from the east in search of the infant Redeemer.

Jesus was born, we are told, *in the days of Herod the king*. There were many Herods; and on some future occasion I shall probably show you a table which may assist you in re-

ST. MATTHEW II. 1—3.

membering their relation to each other, and the order of their succession. At present, it will be sufficient if Theophilus will tell us which Herod is mentioned in the passage before us.

Theophilus. It is Herod, commonly called the Great; who was at first governor of Judea, and was afterwards made king of that country by the Romans.

Reader. True; and his days were now drawing near to their end; for the birth of Christ took place in the last (i. e. the thirty-fifth or thirty-seventh) year of his reign. His son reigned only nine years; and after that Judea was placed under governors or procurators, and made completely tributary to Rome. Besides this, Archelaus, Herod's son, was not acknowledged as king by the Roman emperor. Of what country was Herod?

Theophilus. He was the son of Antipater, an Idumean.

Reader. And, as you said, he was made king of Judea by the Romans.—Are these facts of any importance with reference to the fulfilment of prophecy?

Theophilus. Yes; they remind us that Judea was under the dominion of foreigners; and that it had lost the privilege of being governed by independent rulers; and hence it appears that the time of the Messiah had fully come, according to that ancient prophecy in Gen. xlix. 10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come."

Reader. How many are the proofs

which Scripture gives that God's kingdom ruleth over all, and that he sees the course of human events from the beginning to the end!

The narrative of the visit of the wise men will furnish matter for many profitable reflections. But let me ask, in the first place, are there any particulars concerning these persons, or their journey to Jerusalem, which you wish to ascertain?

Mary. I have been requested to ask you where they came from?

Reader. Probably from Arabia, or rather, as some suppose, from Persia. But on this point we know no more than what the Bible tells us; namely, that they came from some country to the east of Judea.

Theophilus. They are called *wise men*; I suppose they were what we should call *philosophers*.

Reader. St. Matthew tells us that they were *Magi*, for that is the Greek word which our translators have rendered *wise men*. Now it is commonly supposed that by this term we are to understand oriental philosophers, or rather astrologers, who may also have sustained the character of priests in connection with some of the religious systems then prevalent in the East. Perhaps they were followers of Zoroaster. But this is not a matter of much importance. It may be observed that the *Magi* mentioned in other parts of the New Testament were impostors who practised upon the superstition and credulity of the heathen.

Theophilus. I do not remember that there is any other mention of *Magi* in the New Testament.

ST. MATTHEW II. 1—3.

Reader. Such was Simon of whom we read in the eighth chapter of the Acts ; who is described in the ninth and eleventh verses as practising the arts of a *magos*. And Elymas (Acts xiii. 6, 8) is expressly called a *magos*, which our translators have rendered *sorcerer*.

Theophilus. As these Magi were so celebrated in the East, and were of such ancient standing, is it not rather singular that we do not read of them in the Old Testament ?

Reader. Allusion to their errors and false religion may often have been made even where their name does not occur. But we do sometimes meet with the very name. Rab-mag, in Jerem. xxxix. 3, means The chief Magician, or the head of the Magi. And in Isa. viii. 19, the "wizards that mutter" are the Magim.

Theophilus. Has it not been suggested as probable that the Magi mentioned by St. Matthew are of Jewish extraction ?

Reader. Yes ; but perhaps without sufficient reason. Some of the fathers, according to their bad system of interpreting Scripture, pretended to know a great deal about these wise men. They maintained that they were kings, three in number ; and they professed to know even their names, and the place in which they were buried. This ostentatious ignorance arose partly from their fanciful application of prophecy ; and partly from their habit of following that ignis fatuus, Tradition. What wisdom it is to be content with knowing what God has been pleased to

reveal, and to ask no more ! And how studiously should we avoid pushing our inquiries into matters of mere curiosity, such as have nothing to do with the real elucidation of Scripture history, the discovery of God's will concerning our salvation, or the formation of Christian character !

As far as our real information goes, these wise men appear to have been heathen philosophers. Here then we seem to behold a prelude to the calling of the Gentiles into the church of the Redeemer,—a token of that mercy whereby Christ has been made a light to lighten the Gentiles, to give knowledge of salvation to people of all regions under heaven. At all events, we may find cause for gratitude and rejoicing if we contemplate the arrival of these Magi in Jerusalem as an emblem of that happy and flourishing condition of the Christian church which has been so beautifully described by Isaiah, and will, one day, we hope, be realized in all its fulness. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged ; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah ; all they from Sheba shall come : they shall bring gold and incense ; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." Isa. lx. 3, 5, 6.

May not this passage of the Evangelist also give us a call, and encour-

ST. MATTHEW II. 1—3.

agement, to send the Gospel into the East, the country of the Magi?

And let the pains which these wise men took in their search for the infant Jesus, admonish us to use all diligence in our endeavours to become acquainted with him and his great salvation. Let us consider, too, how sad is our case, if, while the Gospel is brought to our very door, and Jesus Christ is evidently set forth among us, not only as born into the world, but as crucified for us and risen again, we are yet careless and indifferent concerning his blessed person and his most glorious work! The wise men undertook a long journey in order to see the newly-born King of the Jews. "Oh how will their coming so far as from the east to seek Christ rise up another day in judgment against us, if we refuse to be found by Christ, who came from heaven to save us!" "Those who truly desire to know Christ, and to find him, will not regard pains or perils in seeking after him."

Theophilus. I observe, Sir, that the wise men, on their arrival at Jerusalem, spoke of the birth of some illustrious prince in terms which seem to indicate that the subject was quite familiar to their own minds, as well as a matter of general expectation among the Jews.

Reader. We cannot be surprised to find that the birth of the Messiah, the King of the Jews, was expected about that time by the Jews themselves, when we consider how clearly the period of his appearance in the world had been determined by the voice of prophecy. The question

proposed to John the Baptist (Luke iii. 15), and the frequent appearance of false Christs (see Matt. xxiv. 5) about the time of our Saviour's first coming, are striking indications of the fact. It is remarkable also that a certain undefined expectation of the appearance of some illustrious personage, who should assume universal empire, was very prevalent in other Eastern countries at this period. Perhaps the Jews, who were scattered in various parts of the world, had given rise to this expectation, by declaring, to a certain extent, the signification of their prophecies. But be this as it may, it is plain that an opinion on this subject had become very common, especially in the East.

I will read to you some remarkable extracts from two Roman historians, which affect this point. The first is from Suetonius, in his *Life of Vespasian*.—"An ancient and settled persuasion had become very prevalent throughout the East, that it had been decreed by the fates that some should go forth from Judea and obtain universal empire." The other passage, of like import, is from the fifth book of the *History of Tacitus*.—"Many were persuaded that it was contained in the ancient books of the priests, that, at that very period of time, the East would prevail; and that some should go forth from Judea, and obtain universal empire." The historians, ignorant alike of the origin of such an expectation, and of its real fulfilment, applied it to the dominion of the Roman emperors. But their testimony is, on this very account, the more important. Per-

ST. MATTHEW II. 1—3.

haps some of you may remember that the poet Virgil, in one of his Eclogues, alludes to the expected birth of some illustrious progeny from heaven, in terms very much like those employed by the inspired prophet Isaiah relating to the kingdom of Messiah.

Much could be said respecting these passages in ancient authors, which would not serve our present purpose. They possess an historical value, and may tend to the confirmation of the truth. At present, it may be enough for us to remember, with devout thankfulness, that God has been pleased to favour us with abundant evidence in support of religion; and to charge ourselves, in humble dependence on divine grace, to make a good use of the benefit thus conferred upon us, by meekly submitting to the sceptre of that King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace, concerning whom we have received full and sufficient information. Oh, may he reign in our hearts, and may every thought and desire be brought into a willing subjection to his most righteous and most beneficial sway!

Mary. What kind of star may we suppose it to have been which the wise men saw?

Reader. Perhaps this is one of the many cases in which it is our wisdom not to suppose anything at all. We know that the Magi saw something which had the appearance of a star, but we know nothing more. Some have conjectured that it was a meteor, moving at no great height from the surface of the earth; others, that

it was a constellation, or peculiar conjunction of the planets; others have even fancied that it was a comet; while others, again, have supposed that it was the same light as that which shone round about the shepherds of Bethlehem; and the reveries of some of the fathers (as they are called) have proclaimed it to have been an angel! All that we can know, however, amounts to this; that the wise men saw an extraordinary luminary, probably in the western part of the heavens, which was made the means of conducting them to the birth-place of Christ. This is the largest paraphrase which we can give to the words, "We, in the east, have seen his star."—Repeat that remarkable prophecy in which the Messiah himself is spoken of under the figure of a star.

Mary. It is the prophecy which was uttered by Balaam. "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth." Numb. xxiv. 17.

Reader. Whether or not the remembrance of this prophecy had been preserved in the East, and may have been alluded to by the wise men, we cannot say. Nor do we know with what degree of certainty, or in what manner, they were assured of the significance of the star which they discovered. Either these Magi, of their own accord, interpreted the appearance of the star as an announcement of the birth of the great Deliverer; or else God vouchsafed to give them instructions by

immediate revelation, or in some miraculous manner, as he did afterwards with reference to their return to their own country. But one thing at least we know, and this ought to be a subject of serious reflection; namely, that we have been blessed with a guide to Christ, more glorious in character, and more distinct in its announcement, than that which the wise men saw. We have *the holy Scriptures*, and they testify of Him. Let us follow their guidance, in humility and faith; and we shall find that they will lead us into the palace and the presence-chamber of the King of kings. "Thy word is a light unto my feet, and a lamp unto my path."

The wise men said, "We have seen his star, and we are come to worship him," i. e. to do him homage, as the great and illustrious prince whose birth was expected. It is probable that they did not know his real character, and had little idea how worthy he is of supreme honour, of worship in the strict sense of the expression. But we know this. "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Heb. i. 6. Those who have been truly led to Christ by that bright star, the word of revelation, will fall down and worship him in spirit and in truth; they will say to him practically, by the surrender of their hearts, and the obedience of their lives, My Lord, and my God! "Have we seen Christ's star?" says a pious writer on this passage, "let us study to do him honour!"

Theophilus, to what cause would you attribute the trouble of Herod, when he was told of the birth of the "King of the Jews?"

Theophilus. I fear that we must attribute it to his wicked heart and guilty conscience. He knew how justly he was disliked on account of his cruel and tyrannical conduct; and he dreaded the consequences of his crimes, whenever any one should arise to make head against him.

Reader. And, in another point of view, we may trace this disquietude to false apprehensions, and a mistaken opinion concerning the nature of the Messiah's kingdom. Here we discover two great sources of uneasiness, which have caused perplexity to many men. A guilty conscience, that is the worst tormentor; and a set of mistaken opinions, or foolish prejudices, is another, capable of inflicting much misery and pain. Let us cultivate a conscience void of offence; and aim also at a right understanding, a sober, well-informed judgment, as a subsidiary and concurrent source of comfort. A right judgment in all things, how great a blessing! What a happy preservative against vain hopes and distressing fears! And how needful to each of ourselves, in these days especially, assaulted as we are by infidelity on the one hand, and by superstition, fanaticism, and false pretensions of various kinds on the other! Let us, therefore, without ceasing, study the Scriptures and pray to God.

We may observe, also, that Herod's mistaken notions concerning the na-

ST. MATTHEW II. 4—10.

ture of Messiah's kingdom were not only a source of anxiety to himself, but became, also, the occasion of his animosity against the infant. And hence we are reminded that "the greatest enmities, and the bitterest animosities, have arisen from causeless fears and groundless jealousies." It is only the reign of perfect truth that will be the reign of perfect peace. Blest Prince of Peace, thy kingdom come!

It is a melancholy picture which this verse brings before us. "Christ, who was the angel's song, the wise men's joy, and Israel's consolation, becomes Herod's fear and Jerusalem's terror." Yes; all Jerusalem was troubled together with guilty Herod. This must have proceeded from gross ignorance, to say the least. The wise men found the Jews, the professors of the true religion, uninformed on a point concerning which they ought to have been well instructed, and uneasy at the mention of one whose name ought to have been a cause of thankfulness and rejoicing! And, alas! how many nominal Christians are equally ignorant of the Saviour, and equally offended at him! Satan in the soul, like Herod on the throne, hates and is troubled at the name of Christ; and the poor slaves of Satan, like the Jews in the days of Herod, are unprepared to give a welcome to their glorious Deliverer. Ignorance of the true nature of Christ and his office, and a willing subjection to the tyranny of sin,—what impediments are these to that cheerful reception of the Saviour, wherein alone

consist the real peace and happiness of every man's soul! From such hardness of heart, and contempt of thy holy word, good Lord, deliver us!

HYMN.

Micah iv. 1—5.

Behold, the mountain of the Lord
In latter days shall rise,
Shall tower above the meaner hills,
And draw the wond'ring eyes.

To this the joyful nations round,
All tribes and tongues, shall flow:
"Ascend the hill of God," they say,
"And to his temple go."

The beam that shines on Sion's hill
Shall lighten every land;
The King that reigns in Sion's towers
Shall all the world command.

No strife shall vex Messiah's reign,
Or mar the peaceful years;
To ploughshares shall they beat their swords,
To pruning-hooks their spears.

Come then, O come, from ev'ry land,
To worship at his shrine;
And, walking in the light of God,
With holy beauty shine.

LOGAN.

§ V.

CHAP. II. 4—10.

The wise men out of the East are directed to Christ by a star.

4 And when he had gathered all 'the chief priests and 'scribes of the people together, 'he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 'And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, 'that shall 'rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

^e2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. ^f2 Chron. xxxiv. 13. ¹ Mac. v. 42. & vii. 12. ^g Mal. ii. 7.—^h Mic. v. 2. John vii. 42. ⁱ Rev. ii. 27. ^j Or, *seed*.

Reader. In these verses, the place which was honoured as the scene of our Lord's nativity is brought very strikingly before our notice. We are conducted, in thought, to Bethlehem; and, if we rightly consider the great event by which that town was distinguished, we shall be able to say, in the words of an honoured disciple of old, "Master, it is good for us to be here!" In this passage we have also a continuation of the narra-

tive concerning the visit of the wise men to the infant Saviour; and in it we find many particulars which may well arrest our attention, and afford subject for profitable reflection. Perhaps we may do well to review the whole passage, verse by verse.—Does any question arise out of the fourth verse, which stands first in the portion that has now been read?

Theophilus. I have been requested to ask who were the chief priests mentioned in this verse? We read in the Old Testament of one High Priest, who was distinguished from all other priests, but it does not appear so clearly what priest, besides this High Priest, could lay any claim to the title of chief.

Reader. But you do read of chief priests in the Old Testament, do you not? Turn, for example, to 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

Theophilus. "Moreover, all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem."

Reader. And you may find mention of the chief of the priests in other parts of the Old Testament; for instance, in 1 Chron. xxiv. 6; Ezra, viii. 24; Nehem. xii. 7.—By "chief priests" in the New Testament we are to understand not only the High Priest for the time being, and others who had served that office, but also the heads of the twenty-four orders or classes into which the priests were divided in the time of David. These heads of the sacerdotal families, as such, were members of the Sanhe-

drim ; and hence it became usual to designate any priest who was a member of that body by the title of "chief priest."

Theophilus. And who were the scribes ?

Reader. They were the students and learned expounders of the law, —the same as are elsewhere called lawyers (Matt. xxii. 35) and doctors of the law (Luke v. 17). They also acted as registrars, and were employed in drawing up legal documents.—In what respect does the conduct of Herod and his advisers, as described in the fourth and fifth verses, deserve to be imitated by us ?

Theophilus. That question had not occurred to my mind before ; but I am sure that we may profitably do one thing which may be considered as an imitation of their example,—namely, always consult the Scriptures when we wish to learn anything concerning Christ.

Reader. That is what I meant.—And what a solemn reflection is here forced upon our minds, that men may consult the Scriptures respecting Christ, and may even become learned in the page of inspiration, without having any saving knowledge of Him "of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." Nay, how possible is it for men to seek an acquaintance with Scripture, and its meaning, for purposes directly hostile to religion ! What an awful mass of impiety and depravity is the heart of a wicked man ! Oh, let us search the Scriptures, not for any mere worldly purpose, nor even in the spirit of vain curiosity, but in order

that we may find them able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Where do we find the prophecy to which the chief priests and scribes referred as pointing out the birth-place of Messiah ?

Theophilus. In Micah v. 2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Reader. Here is a little verbal difficulty ; but perhaps so slight as hardly to require notice. In the Evangelist we read, "thou art not the least ;" in the prophet, "though thou be little." Some critics have suggested that the words of the original prophecy should be read interrogatively, "art thou too little ?" implying, "thou art not." But, even without this, the difficulty vanishes if we remember that *the leading idea is the same* in both forms of the verse ; —namely, that Bethlehem, notwithstanding its political insignificance, should yet be highly honoured and distinguished.

In the Evangelist we read "princes" instead of "thousands ;" as in the original. Here also the difference is more apparent than real ; for in Hebrew the same word signified *a thousand* and *a prince* ; from the circumstance that the people had been distributed into thousands, each under its own captain, chief, or prince. You perceive how easy and natural it would be, especially in such a

language as the Hebrew, to say "a thousand" instead of "the captain of a thousand."

Now, with respect to Bethlehem, —let me ask you, what is the meaning of the word?

Theophilus. In Hebrew, as you have sometimes told us, *The house of Bread.*

Reader. Let us remember that He who was born there is indeed "the true bread which cometh down from heaven." Have you discovered why this town is so fully described as Bethlehem Ephratah, or Bethlehem in the land of Judah?

Theophilus. To distinguish it from another Bethlehem, in Galilee, belonging to the tribe of Zabulon.

Reader. In what respect had this Bethlehem already become remarkable?

Theophilus. As the birth-place of David, the illustrious human ancestor and one great type of the Messiah. 1 Sam. xvi. 4. Hence Bethlehem is called "the city of David."

Reader. And it is very evident, from the answer given to Herod, as well as from ancient Jewish writings, that the Jews expected that the Messiah—the Son of David—would be born at Bethlehem. Can you recite a verse out of another Evangelist, which tends to prove that such a persuasion was prevalent among the Jewish people at the period of our Saviour's ministry?

Theophilus. Yes. "Some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem,

where David was?" John vii. 41, 42.

Reader. We find very early mention of this place in the Old Testament; and that too in connection with some events of great interest.—Read Gen. xxxv. 19.

Theophilus. "And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem."

Reader. Refer to some verses in that book of the Old Testament in which the name of Bethlehem most frequently occurs.

Theophilus. You allude to the book of Ruth.—Here we find that Elimelech, Naomi's husband, was a "man of Bethlehem Judah," and that their two sons were "Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah."—Naomi and Ruth "returned to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley-harvest." Boaz, of the kindred of Elimelech, "came from Bethlehem."—"And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in *Ephratah*, and be famous in *Bethlehem*."

Reader. We have already seen the place which is occupied by Boaz in the human ancestry of our blessed Lord.—You may find another reference to Bethlehem, in Psalm cxxxii. 6.—It lay about seven miles southwest of Jerusalem.—It was but a small town,—so small that in John vii. 42, it is called, in the original, "the village of Bethlehem."—The meanness of our Lord's birth-place

may be regarded as one part of his humiliation.—“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” 2 Cor. viii. 9. May we reflect with unfeigned thankfulness upon that grace,—that free, unmerited goodness and compassion,—to which we owe our deliverance from sin and ruin!—And let us learn also to become, more and more completely, followers of the blessed Jesus in his humility and lowliness of mind. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Phil. ii. 5—8.

“Out of thee,” says the voice of prophecy, “shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel;”—shall rule, as a shepherd does his flock, that is the force of the original. How tender and how faithful is the care of the good Shepherd! How blessed his dominion in the soul! Let us yield ourselves to his governance and guidance, and herein we shall find true liberty, and real happiness;—liberty from the slavery of sin and Satan; and happiness which is beautifully depicted by those expressions in Ezekiel, “I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the

Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.” Ezek. xxxiv. 24—26.

Theophilus, Why did Herod make such a secret of his consultation with the wise men? It is said that he called them *privily*.

Reader. Ah, guilty Herod! He was, perhaps, afraid that if he did this openly, the Jews, knowing his cruel and tyrannical disposition, would suspect him of some design against the infant Jesus, and that they would take measures for insuring His safety by concealment, or by conveying Him out of the tyrant’s reach. At all events, we know that he did this with some evil design.—A guilty conscience, and an evil intention, often lead men to adopt sly, stealthy methods of proceeding. Oh, the disgrace of sin!

When I read the eighth verse, I am often disposed to meditate long upon the hypocrisy of Herod,—the infatuation to which he was made subject,—and the singular inconsistency of his conduct.

Look at his *hypocrisy*—“That I may come and worship him also.” No; whether he intended to mock him with the form of homage or not, certain it is that his ultimate design was to destroy him. Thus wicked men often conceal their evil designs under the appearance of religion.

Thus crafty and politic enemies of the Gospel often seek to destroy its reputation and its efficacy, and to stop its progress in the world, even while they pay it a compliment with their lips and by their profession. Such are the depths of Satan! Such the dark and intricate mazes of the human heart, as long as the old serpent lies coiled up within it!—How often also do ungodly men, like Herod, seek to make use of their more pious neighbours, for the accomplishment of their evil purposes! They look upon the more simple-hearted as fools, and fit only to become their dupes,—the prey of the more spirited and clever! But, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.” Psalm ii. 4. How awful to awake from their delusion only at the moment when this threatening begins to be fulfilled!

The *infatuation* of Herod, notwithstanding his craft and artifice, is remarkable. His intention was, doubtless, deeply hidden in his own heart; and to this secrecy he probably trusted. But it would seem to us that, if the Most High had not purposely overruled his counsels, he would certainly, as he might easily, have adopted some means more effectual for securing his purpose than those to which he trusted.—But it is thus that God, in his wisdom, “casteth out the counsels of princes.”

Once more, observe the *inconsistency* of Herod’s conduct on this occasion. He appears to have believed, to a certain extent, in the word of prophecy; that is to say, he seems

to have believed that the birth of Messiah was divinely foretold, and that it was to take place at Bethlehem; and, therefore, that the infant of whom he was in search was, to say the least, under the divine protection: and yet, at the same time, he used his efforts to prevent the fulfilment of prophecy, to defeat the designs of the Most High! But Herod was not alone in this kind of inconsistency. Are there not many in our day who have a certain respect for the Bible as a divine revelation, a kind of belief in its declarations, and yet practically oppose its dictates, and militate against it, as though it were possible for them to cancel its threatenings, and to negative its most solemn announcements? Here is another proof of the treachery of sin, and the miserable delusion which may befall those men who walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful. Our only means of safety is to give our hearts to God; to submit unreservedly to his will; to live and act with a single eye to his glory.

Let me now call your attention to the ninth and tenth verses. Lo, the star! In this part of the narrative we may find an encouraging assurance that God will guide those who are disposed to seek the Saviour; and, in general, that “if we go on as far as we can in the way of our duty, God will direct and enable us to do that which, of ourselves, we cannot do.” The sight of the star, which again made its appearance, must have been very cheering to

ST. MATTHEW II. 4—10.

these wise men, when they were setting out from Jerusalem on the road to Bethlehem. Thus "God is sometimes pleased to favour young converts with such tokens of his love as are very encouraging to them, in reference to the difficulties they meet with at their setting out in the ways of God." Such encouragements, if granted, ought to be thankfully received and wisely improved; but, if they are withheld, their absence ought not to lead to impatience, unbelief, repining, or despair.

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." The original is very emphatic, denoting the intensity of their delight. Thus, also, "we should be glad of everything that will show us the way to Christ."—Hence we may take occasion to reflect that, under the ordinary circumstances of the Christian life, "the tokens of God's presence and favour cannot but fill with joy unspeakable the souls of those that know how to value them."—And, since the joy of the wise men was occasioned, as it appears, by the appearance of the star after a temporary obscurity or retirement from their sight, we may hence take encouragement to hold on our way in faith under dark and mysterious dispensations of Providence, or in seasons when we do not experience the comforts of divine grace; humbly trusting in God, and hoping for a return of light, and cheerfulness, and joy.

Have we no star to guide us to Bethlehem where Christ was? nay more, to heaven, where Christ is,

and where he sitteth at the right hand of God? We have that bright and glorious luminary, the written word of God. Let us follow its guidance, and we shall rejoice in it as being indeed "a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path."

HYMN I.

Bright was the guiding star that led,
With mild benignant ray,
The Gentiles to the lowly shed
Where the Redeemer lay.

But lo! a brighter, clearer light
Now points to his abode;
It shines thro' sin and sorrow's night,
To guide us to our God.

O haste to follow where it leads,
Its gracious call obey;
Be rugged wilds, or flow'ry meads,
The Christian's destined way.

O gladly tread the narrow path
While light and grace are given!
Who meekly follow Christ on earth
Shall reign with him in heaven.

HYMN II.

Sons of men, behold from far,
Hail the long-expected star!
Jacob's star, that gilds the night,
Guides bewilder'd nature right.

Mild it shines on all beneath,
Piercing through the shades of death;
Scattering error's wide-spread night,
Kindling darkness into light.

Nations all, remote and near,
Haste to see your God appear;
Haste, for Him your hearts prepare;
Meet him manifested there.

Sing, ye morning stars again,
God descends to dwell with men,
Deigns for man his life to employ,
Shout, ye sons of God, for joy.

WESLEY.

§ VI.

CHAP. II. 11, 12.

The wise men worship Christ, and offer their presents.

11 ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, 'they 'presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God 'in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

† Ps. lxxii. 10. Is. lx. 6. † Or, offered.—† ch. i. 20.

Reader. Here we find that the wise men, following divine direction, were not misled, but guided to the object of their search. They came "into the house" and "saw the young child with Mary his mother." Thus also we shall be well informed, and led by the right way to the right end, if we meekly and thankfully follow those heavenly counsels which are given to us in the holy Scriptures. Let Theophilus read a promise to this effect in Psalm xxv. 8, 9.

Theophilus. "Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way."

Reader. Read also Psalm xxxii. 8, 9.

Theophilus. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee."

Reader. May God give us humble and teachable hearts, ready, at all times, to walk with cheerfulness in that way of salvation, and that path of duty, which his word points out! How did the wise men act when they saw the infant?

Theophilus. "They fell down and worshipped him."

Reader. Yes; they did him homage, notwithstanding his poor lodging, and the mean appearance of everything about him, so different from what they might have expected. Here again we discover traces of humility of mind, and a devout acquiescence in divine appointments. The proud Jews would not receive the Messiah because he did not come with outward pomp and splendour. Hence they continued in unbelief. And we shall be unbelievers too, unless we approach the Gospel with humble minds, prepared to receive and reverence the truth, not merely such as we may expect to find, but such as God may be pleased to reveal, and to present for our acceptance.—After the wise men had paid their respects, by tokens of reverence and submission, what followed?

Theophilus. They "opened their treasures."

Reader. That is, they opened the caskets or vessels in which they had brought their gifts. Can you refer to any passages of Scripture, which indicate the ancient practice of offering presents to royal personages in token of respect?

Theophilus. A departure from this custom is mentioned as a mark of disrespect towards Saul, on the part of some of his subjects. "The children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents." 1 Sam. x. 27. On the other hand, the queen of Sheba manifested her high respect for Solomon by the abundance of gifts which she took with her, when she made her celebrated visit. "She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones." 1 Kings x. 2.

Reader. You might have reminded us also of the presents which Jacob sent to Egypt to "the man, the governor of the land" (Gen. xliii. 11—25); and especially of a passage in that remarkably prophetic psalm in which "David, praying for Solomon, sheweth the goodness and glory of his, in type, and, in truth, of Christ's kingdom." Read Psalm lxxii. 10, 11.

Theophilus. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him."

Reader. How glorious is the prospect which that prophecy opens to our view! May it be speedily ful-

filled!—What were the gifts which the Magi presented unto the infant Jesus?

Theophilus. Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Reader. It has been remarked that these gifts, and especially the gold, were a providential and seasonable supply to Joseph and Mary, which probably enabled them to bear the expenses of their journey into Egypt.—Frankincense is a fragrant balsamic product of the East, especially of Arabia, used in worship. Myrrh is a substance of the same kind and climate, valued on account of its property of preserving bodies from putrefaction, and used principally in embalming the dead.

Early Christian writers employed their imagination in assigning a figurative meaning to these offerings. *Gold*, say they, was offered to our Saviour as to a *king*; *frankincense*, as to *God*; and *myrrh*, as to a *man that was to die*. The conceit is pretty, and is more harmless than many of the speculations of "the fathers;" but, of course, I do not mention it as having anything to do with the principles of sound interpretation.—One lesson, however, of practical importance, may be fairly deduced from the circumstance now before us. We see that the wise men offered to Christ some of the best and most choice productions of the earth; and this may admonish us to present to him the best gifts and offerings at our disposal,—to devote to him our hearts, to offer him our worship, and to consecrate to his service, in one way or other, our pro-

ST. MATTHEW II. 11, 12.

perty, and our faculties of body and of mind.

Observe, also, that the wise men presented themselves first, offering personal homage, and afterwards offered their gifts. And let us remember that we have no reason to expect that any of *our gifts* will be accepted by Christ, unless we first present *ourselves* to him as living sacrifices. Read the commendation bestowed by St. Paul upon the churches of Macedonia, in 2 Cor. viii. 3—5.

Theophilus. "To their power, I bear record, yea and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

Reader. And read Romans xii. 1; —for, while we see what offerings others have made to Christ, it is right that we should consider well what gifts we are ourselves required to present.

Theophilus. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Reader. Why was it that the Magi did not return to Jerusalem, but "departed into their own country another way?"

Theophilus. Because they were "warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod."

Reader. How would it have grieved them to have been successfully employed as instruments in working the destruction of the infant whom they had sought and visited with so much reverence! But they were preserved from this pain by the direct interposition of Heaven. And "thus they who in all their ways acknowledge God will find that God will, by one method or another, graciously direct their paths." We here discover a second instance of divine interposition in order to prevent serious and well-disposed persons from falling into dangerous or distressing errors. But it is worthy of remark, both in the case of Joseph and in this of the Magi, that supernatural means of guidance were vouchsafed only in cases wherein the use of natural powers and opportunities was insufficient to enable the parties to ascertain their true position. We must not expect extraordinary aids, when the use of more common means would be sufficient.

Theophilus. The preservation of the infant appears to be a striking proof of divine omniscience, and of an ever-watchful Providence.

Reader. It is one among many such proofs. And we are encouraged to remember for our comfort, that, in other cases, as well as in that before us, God has at his disposal abundant and ready means of delivering his faithful people from the craft or power of their enemies. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." 2 Pet. ii. 9. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

ST. MATTHEW II. 11, 12.

The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." Ps. xxvii. 1, 2. " In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust ; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." Ps. lvi. 4.

The total and easy defeat of Herod's crafty device may teach us also to " rejoice in the thought that ' there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord,'—no scheme so artfully devised that he cannot penetrate it, or so politicly formed that he cannot with infinite ease confound it."

There is a question, Theophilus, which I wish to ask you in connection with this whole history of the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem under the guidance of a star. Can you tell me on what day our Church commemorates this event ?

Theophilus. The festival of " The Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles," is set apart chiefly for this purpose. The former part of this chapter of St. Matthew is the Gospel for that day.

Reader. I propose now to conclude our meditations upon this whole transaction by requesting you to read two extracts which I have marked in the books that lie upon the table. One of them is from a little work of which you have heard me speak highly,— " The Penny Sunday Reader ;"—and the other is part of a passage from an old divine, quoted by Bishop Mant in his " Annotations on the Book of Common

Prayer." Read first the passage which you find marked in the smaller volume.

Theophilus. " It is clear that, from whatever sources they obtained it, these Magi certainly had, and so had many others, an expectation of a Saviour that was to come. They possessed, indeed, very limited means of acquiring the most important of all knowledge, the knowledge of God. But they employed those means heartily, and to a good purpose. The consequence was that, as they employed properly their talent, God increased it : they trimmed as well as they could their feeble lamp, and the Lord, therefore, sent them a brighter light. He placed a glorious star in the heavens. At his command it went before them, and brought them to the place where the Messiah they sought was laid, and enabled them to kneel before him and offer him their best treasures. These Gentiles may be considered as the first-fruits of that great harvest Jesus was to gather into the Church ; and the star was a lively emblem of that clear revelation of life and immortality which he has set before us in his holy word. The Gospel shines steadily and purely, and, when followed with diligence and faith, will always, like the star, conduct unto Jesus those who are wise, not in worldly wisdom, but unto salvation. Before our eyes it shines. It has brought us, who are descended from Gentiles, out of darkness into his marvellous light. Every Sabbath day God's ministers direct our attention to this light, and

ST. MATTHEW II. 11, 12.

exhort us to follow whithersoever it may guide us. Brethren, never lose sight of it. Like the sages of old, proceed steadfastly; yield not to weariness, though the way be rugged;—be not daunted, though perils and trials beset your path;—let no temptation allure you from the point at which the object of your pilgrimage is to be obtained. Let the Gospel always be your guiding star, till it shall lead you to Christ,—first through temporal suffering and humiliation,—and finally in everlasting happiness and glory.”

Reader. Read now the passage in “Mant’s Notes on the Book of Common Prayer.”

Theophilus. “If we desire to imitate these wise men, it must be our care to keep our ears open, and our hearts teachable. We must not only see, but follow and embrace most gladly the light that shines upon us from above, and is let down from heaven, for a guide to us; comply cheerfully with every call and motion of his good Spirit; provoke, and, if possible, shame those into a holy and noble emulation, who shut their eyes against it. We must not suffer ourselves to be discouraged by any hardships or dangers, which our duty calls us to: nor grow cold upon the many ill examples we converse among; the general neglect of most, and the bold affronts of some who make it an act of gallantry to insult, and cast all the contempt they can upon, religion: in a word, we must persevere in piety and virtue, though we were left to stand alone; and, in despite of all opprobrious treatment

which they or we may meet from persons who might and should know better, and in truth do not see, only because they will not. Of all this our Saviour hath showed us the necessity by declaring that men cannot believe while they prefer popular esteem before a good conscience: which is, in Scripture language, ‘receiving honour one of another, not seeking that honour which cometh from God only, and loving the praise of men more than the praise of God.’ John v. 44; xii. 43.

“‘When they saw the star,’ again, says the Evangelist, ‘they rejoiced with exceeding great joy,’” a joy that sprang, no doubt, from strong assurances, that this was a token of their journey being well-pleasing to God; and that He would prosper it to their intended purpose of seeing and adoring that wonderful infant where this star was. And here again they are a pattern which we should be infinitely to blame not to copy after. For, as the Apostle upon all occasions urges, we are certainly of all creatures the most ungrateful and stupid, the most unworthy of our happiness, if we do not esteem the conversion of the Gentile world to be one of the most glorious mysteries of Providence that ever was exhibited to mankind. And our feeling of this mercy should be more sensible and tender, because we are the offspring of those Gentiles, and our ancestors once a part of them, as dark, perhaps, as any. It is possible, indeed, we might not have retained the ancient rudeness and savageness of our country. From that

ST. MATTHEW II. 11, 12.

our invaders would soon have delivered us. But, alas, how poor a consideration is it to Christians, that they have been refined into civility and good manners, taught arts and commerce, and improved in industry and learning! Allow these advantages the great value and commendation really due to them, yet still, I say, how little and insignificant are even all these polishings, in comparison of those benefits which come from the knowledge, the obedience, the hopes, and the precious promises of the Gospel! The exalting our minds with this most holy faith, enlarging our ideas of God, giving us a prospect of heaven, seasoning us with a true taste of good and evil, and forming our lives upon the most perfect model of justice and holiness, and order and peace, and all that can procure or preserve the tranquillity and happiness of ourselves and the whole world: this was, in a literal sense, to bring light out of darkness; and (praised be God) no part of his church is blessed with clearer and purer day than ours. This is our glory, this ought to be our joy.

Since then we also are, with these Eastern forerunners, happily conducted to Christ, let us, as they did, fall down and worship Him. We see him not, indeed, like them, in arms and infancy, but, which is at once a tragical and yet most comfortable prospect, dying upon a cross for us; nay, risen again, gone up on high, shedding his gifts and graces down, and perpetually at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. Let us, then, approach with reve-

rence, and open our treasures too; let us present him, not with gold or spices, but with somewhat more becoming him to receive and us to offer; even our bodies, and souls, and spirits. These, though of little value in themselves, will yet be accounted a rich and fragrant, if they be but an humble and a holy, sacrifice: the only effectual sacrifice of thanksgiving; and an oblation which cannot more please Him than it will profit us. For, by such a reasonable service, by such undissembled testimonies of praise and gladness, it is that we must hope God will be inclined to accept and answer our petition, that He "who, by the leading of a star, did manifest his only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, would mercifully grant that we, which know Him now by faith, may, after this life, have the fruition of his glorious Godhead, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

HYMN I.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore him in slumbers reclining,
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom, and offerings divine,
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gold would his favour secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

ST. MATTHEW II. 13—15.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.
HEBER.

HYMN II.

Far as the ices extend,
To the vast ocean's bound,
Let kings to Jesus bend,
And pour their off'rings round:
Arabia raise the song divine,
And Afric join t'exalt his praise.

All princes shall adore,
And gifts and honours bring,
To hail the Saviour's power;
To crown Immanuel King:
Remotest lands shall homage pay,
And earth obey his high commands.

GOODE.

§ VII.

CHAP. II. 13—15.

Joseph fleeth into Egypt, with Jesus and his mother.

13 And when they were departed, behold the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might

be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

« Hos. xi. 1.

Reader. Egypt was at this time a Roman province, in which Herod had no authority. It was the residence of a large number of Jews; many of that people having settled there in the days of Jeremiah, and many more having been attracted thither in later times by various circumstances, especially, perhaps, by the celebrated Temple which had been erected there by Onias IV. Such was the place which God selected as the refuge of the infant Jesus, when his life was sought by a wicked prince. "Egypt had been a house of bondage to Israel, and particularly cruel to the infants of Israel; in Egypt, as much as in Ramah, Rachel had been weeping for her children; yet that is appointed to be a place of refuge to the holy child Jesus. Thus God, when he pleases, can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes." And "all places will be to us what Divine Providence may be pleased to make them."

But I must not yet indulge in practical remarks or reflections on the passage that has been read. My plan, to which I will adhere as closely as possible, is, first to ascertain your acquaintance, or to make you acquainted, with *the meaning* of the sacred text; to dilate upon its *historical bearings*, or otherwise to consider it with regard to its *inter-*

pretation, and the matters of fact which it may contain, in the way of conversation;—and then to point out, as far as I can, the *practical inferences and lessons* to be deduced from the whole, in the way of a concluding address.

Have you any questions to propose concerning the interpretation of the passage now before you, or with reference to the history which it contains?

Theophilus. We are told here, very briefly, that Joseph took the young child and his mother, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod. Have we means of ascertaining any farther particulars respecting this interesting portion of our Saviour's life on earth?

Reader. None whatever. The Holy Spirit has not thought fit to record such particulars; and therefore we may be well content to be ignorant concerning them. Vain tradition, indeed, always ready to satisfy men's curiosity, to amuse the fancy, and to feed the soul with chaff instead of wheat, has been very inventive and loquacious in this matter. It pretends to inform us of the name of the place in which the holy family sojourned; namely, Matarea, not far from the place in which the Temple of Onias stood. But the truth is, that we do not know the place of their abode.—Another story, equally unfounded, and therefore equally unprofitable, is derived from the same unsatisfactory source. It was the practice of early writers, first to suppose, or take for granted, that such or such a prophecy received its ful-

filment in some event which they had in mind, and then to invent or propagate some suitable or corresponding tale. Thus, it is written in Isa. xix. 1, "The Lord shall come into Egypt, and all the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence;" and on this was founded the fictitious narrative, that Joseph and Mary, on their entrance into Egypt with the holy child, went into a certain temple, and immediately the images of the idols were overthrown by a supernatural power, and fell before the infant Saviour, as Dagon once fell before the ark. Of course, priests who had the power of inventing and propagating such interesting narratives easily acquired great power over the minds of an ignorant people, naturally prone to propose vain and frivolous questions.

The legends concerning our Saviour's sojourn in Egypt filled a volume. "There is an apocryphal work in Arabic," says one of our modern commentators, "called 'The Gospel of the Infancy,' which pretends to relate all the acts of Jesus and Mary while in Egypt. I have taken the pains to read this through, and have found it to be a piece of gross superstition, having nothing to entitle it to a shadow of credibility."—How great is our privilege in belonging to a scriptural Church which has rejected the fables and traditions of the church of "the fathers," and has retained, in its purity and its integrity, the inspired word of God! How deep is our responsibility, in possessing this blessing, unknown to our credulous and less enlightened

ancestors in the Christian faith! And how earnest should be our endeavour, by divine grace, to use the gift aright!

Theophilus. I think I have heard or read that this narrative is important as fixing the date of our Saviour's birth.

Reader. It does fix the date of that great event very nearly; for by means of it we connect it with an event the exact date of which is easily ascertained. From the fact that Jesus was born *before the death* of Herod, we learn that the date of his birth is *at least* three years earlier than the common era, called "The Birth of Christ." And, although we do not know *how long* this event took place before the death of Herod, yet, as it seems probable that the space of time which intervened was not very great, we may conclude that the Redeemer was born *about* the time which I have mentioned.

Theophilus. I am not quite sure that I rightly understand the application of the prophecy quoted in the fifteenth verse.

Reader. Read the whole verse in which it occurs; namely, Hosea xi. 1.

Theophilus. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

Reader. With this compare Exod. iv. 22, 23.

Theophilus. "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go that he may serve me."

Reader. And Numbers xxiv. 8.

Theophilus. "God brought him forth out of Egypt."

Reader. It is plain that the words of Hosea, in their original connection, referred to the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt under Moses. In the Gospel they are applied, say some, by the way of analogy, to Christ, the Head of the church; and it is probable that, when St. Matthew wrote, the passage was generally regarded by the Jews as relating, in some way or other, to the Messiah. Perhaps the more correct way of stating the case may be as follows. The words refer, in the first instance, to the people of Israel, spoken of as one man, and called the son of God, as in Exod. iv. 22, 23. But the inspired Evangelist, by divine authority, teaches us to view the passage also in the light of a prediction. By the application which he makes of it, he instructs us that Israel, in the return from Egypt, was a type of Christ, the events of whose life were even then present to the divine mind; and he reminds us that the natural Israelites were spiritually represented in the person of the Messiah. We learn, by later revelation, that several portions of the Old Testament, which, in their immediate and literal sense, related to passing events of Jewish history, contained also a reference to the more distant, but more important, history of Christ and his people. 1 Cor. x. 4—9; Gal. iv. 28—30.

With reference to this twofold application of the words of Hosea, a pious commentator remarks, "It is no new thing for God's sons to be in Egypt, in a strange land, in a house

of bondage ; but they shall be fetched out."

Can I give you any farther satisfaction in the way of mere interpretation or exposition of these verses ?

Theophilus. I am not aware, Sir, that any other question arises in our minds on the present occasion.

READER. Let us now proceed to make some practical reflections, and to derive some religious instruction, from this portion of Holy Scripture.

Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.—His malice and cruelty were foreseen and foretold. And hence we are reminded of the most encouraging fact, that God is intimately acquainted with all the crafty and malicious designs or projects of his people's enemies. He says, as it were, to every enemy of himself and of his cause, as he once said to the haughty Sennacherib by the mouth of Isaiah,—“I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.” Isaiah xxxvii. 28. And he who is thus acquainted with the ill-will of wicked men or evil spirits can easily frustrate the mischief which he foresees, and can destroy the power of those who exalt themselves against him. Oh let us mingle faith with that petition to God, our merciful Father,—“Graciously hear us, that those evils, which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us be brought to nought ; and by the providence of thy goodness they may be dispersed ; that we thy servants,

being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto thee in thy holy church, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.—Here we have a farther “instance of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus. As there was no room for him in the inn at Bethlehem, so there was no quiet room for him in the land of Judea.” Thus early were the indications of the mournful fact, that “he came unto his own, and his own received him not.” “He was banished almost as soon as he was born.” “Lord, how great an humiliation was this, not only to become an infant, but in thine infancy to be hurried up and down, and driven out of thine own land as a vagabond !” —May we cherish a deep devotion and a reverent love towards the once suffering, but now glorified, Redeemer ! And may we learn to follow him in his great humility !

Flee into Egypt.—This teaches us that, in certain seasons of difficulty or danger, it is lawful, and in every respect right, for God's people to seek protection by flight, or by otherwise endeavouring to escape the evil which may be designed against them, as long as they can do so without the breach of a plain and positive commandment. It is fanaticism, and not faith, which would run into the flames of persecution, or rush upon the sword of the destroyer. “When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.” Matt. x. 23.

Flee into Egypt.—Perhaps we may

ST. MATTHEW II. 13—15.

be permitted to regard this command as an earnest of favour to be extended to the Gentiles, in conveying to them the knowledge of Christ and his salvation. It is delightful to watch even the first faint glimmerings of that "light" which was appointed "to lighten the Gentiles" as well as "to be the glory of his people Israel."

Be thou there until I bring thee word.—God, you observe, keeps his people in a state of continual dependence upon him, and makes it their duty to await, and comply with, the indications of his will. With respect to our station in life, or any other circumstances of our lot, though we may desire a change, yet let us wait God's pleasure. Let us follow what may at least commend itself to our conscience and our sober judgment as the leading of Divine Providence. "Be thou there until I bring thee word."

Flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word.—How often we may observe that God does not work miracles, when ordinary means, sufficient for the accomplishment of a purpose, are at hand. He employs his miraculous and extraordinary power only in cases in which it may be required for some wise, benevolent, or necessary end, which could not be otherwise attained. Or rather, perhaps, I should say, God works miracles, not when man may choose to expect or to desire them, but according to the good pleasure of his own most perfect will. Will not God, in order to protect the infant Jesus, cut off Herod by a sudden

death? Will he not smite with blindness those who shall be sent to slay him? No. Christ himself must flee into Egypt. God does not see fit to put forth that kind of power, or to give that kind of testimony, which a different set of circumstances might have called forth. "He doeth all things well."

When he arose, he departed into Egypt.—Here is a beautiful example of faith and obedience. Unbelief might have suggested that such a flight could not be needed in favour of such an infant;—or it might have whispered,—If this flight be indeed necessary, then perhaps the infant is not that wonderful One whom you have supposed him to be. But no. Joseph and Mary believed the word which had been spoken,—and were strong in faith, giving glory to God; and their faith issued in a prompt, unhesitating obedience. When he arose—without delay—even before daybreak—Joseph took the young child and his mother, and departed into Egypt.—When our instructions are clear, let our obedience be prompt and cheerful.

He took the young child and his mother by night.—Yes;—privately and cautiously, notwithstanding his conviction that the power of God was engaged on behalf of the infant. He acted in the spirit of that injunction, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Promises of safety and deliverance must not make us rash or presumptuous. We must expect the fulfilment of such promises in the use of means, not in the neglect of them.

And was there until the death of Herod : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.—This shielding of the infant Jesus from the malice and rage of the cruel Herod is a beautiful emblem of the effectual care and vigilance of Almighty God on behalf of his whole church—of all his faithful people—in the hour of danger and alarm. Let every believer confide in the divine protection; and say thankfully, but humbly, with David of old, “In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.” Ps. xxvii. 5.

PSALM XCVII.

Jehovah reigns! let all the earth
In his just government rejoice;
Let all the isles, with sacred mirth,
In his applause unite their voice!

Thou, Lord of all, art seated high,
Above earth's potentates enthron'd!
Thou, Lord, unrivall'd in the sky,
Supreme by heavenly hosts art own'd.

Ye, who to serve the Lord aspire,
Abhor what's ill, and truth esteem;
He'll keep his servants' souls entire,
And them from wicked hands redeem.

Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord!
Memorials of his holiness
Deep in your faithful breasts record,
And with your thankful tongues express.

§ VIII.

CHAP. II. 16—18.

Herod slayeth the children.

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by *Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

* Jer. xxxi. 15.

Reader. This is a dark passage in the history of human ungodliness and crime. And, as a dispensation of Divine Providence, it would be mysterious and difficult to our apprehension, did we not consider how absolutely the lives of all men are in the hands of God,—how completely they have been forfeited by sin,—and that it is more than probable that God, in his mercy, made the cruelty of Herod towards these infants minister to their speedy and eternal benefit.

Theophilus. This massacre is, I

think, one of the most inhuman transactions of which I have ever read. The account of it is painful in the extreme; and, if it did not rest upon high authority, would be almost incredible.

Reader. The narrative, considered in itself, is indeed equally mournful and astonishing. But here again we have an incidental confirmation of the truth and accuracy of Scripture history. Although this murder, not having had a bearing upon any political change or movement, is not recorded by common historians; yet it is in perfect accordance with the character and proceedings of Herod in many matters which, being of a political character, did come within the range of their observations. Macrobius indeed (*Saturn. ii. 4*), records a jest of Augustus, to the effect that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son,—which some persons suppose to have had reference to the slaughter of the innocents. But be this as it may, there are abundant examples which serve to show that this horrid piece of cruelty is no more than might have been expected at the hands of Herod.—Read a passage which I have marked in the book that lies before you, containing an enumeration of some of this tyrant's atrocities.

Theophilus. "Aristobulus, brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered by his directions at eighteen years of age, because the people of Jerusalem had shown some affection for his person. In the seventh year of his reign he put to death Hyrcanus, grandfather of Mariamne, then eighty

years of age, and who had formerly saved Herod's life; a man who, in every revolution of fortune, had shown a mild and peaceable disposition. His beloved and beautiful wife Mariamne was publicly executed; and her mother Alexandra followed soon after. Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, were strangled in prison by his orders, upon groundless suspicions, when they were at man's estate, were married, and had children. In his last sickness, he sent orders throughout Judea, requiring the presence of all the chief men of the nation at Jericho. When they were come, he caused them all to be shut up in the circus; and, calling for his sister Salome and her husband Alexas, he said to them, 'My life is now short; I know the Jewish people, and that nothing will please them better than my death. You have them now in your custody. As soon as the breath is out of my body, and before my death can be known, do you let in the soldiers upon them, and kill them. All Judea then, and every family, will, though unwillingly, mourn at my death.' Surely there could be no cruelty which such a man was not capable of perpetrating."

Reader. And it is worthy of remark, that the Evangelist does not make any comment upon the bad character of this wretched tyrant. It is the usual custom of the sacred writers to give a simple narrative of facts, without stopping to express admiration, or any other sentiment, at the circumstances which they re-

cord; or to dilate upon the character and motives of the actors. This speaks greatly in favour of their credibility as historians; and, in fact, it points us to that fountain of truth and purity from which they derived inspiration and guidance. It may serve also to suggest to us a religious duty;—namely, not to speak evil of other men, except when necessary; and, even then, not to take pleasure in casting blame or discredit upon them.

Theophilus. Perhaps you will be kind enough to explain to us the application of the prophecy to which the Evangelist here refers.

Reader. These words of Jeremiah (xxxi. 15) referred primarily to the lamentations which were heard in the neighbourhood of Ramah when Nebuzar-adan collected in that place the captives from Judah and Benjamin whom he was about to carry away to Babylon. See Jer. xl. 1. Ramah was in the tribe of Benjamin; and the mother of that tribe is most elegantly represented as bewailing the calamity of her descendants.—Now Bethlehem was situate at the distance of about twelve miles from Ramah, and lay in the tribe of Judah; but Rachel's tomb was there; and hence the prophecy of Jeremiah is to be regarded as receiving a second and farther accomplishment in the slaughter of the infants, over whose death, with equal propriety and beauty, Rachel may be represented as weeping—though not as the mother of the tribe, yet as having been buried in the neighbourhood. There is great beauty in the

figure of Rachel weeping over her children; it is a specimen of that genuine and exalted poetry with which the language of Scripture abounds. And, what is more, the second fulfilment of the words of Jeremiah,—which no one, antecedently to the event of the application made by the inspired Evangelist, would have supposed to possess any farther reference or meaning,—is a proof of the certainty of the divine foreknowledge, and the depths of divine revelation.

Other modes of explaining St. Matthew's application of the passage are, I think, less satisfactory.—Some say that, perhaps, the massacre extended to the territory of Ramah, which bordered on that of Bethlehem, and so the children of Rachel, literally speaking, were involved in the calamity.—One commentator remarks, it is “as if the Evangelist had said, Bethlehem at this time resembled Ramah; for, as Rachel might be said to weep over her children which were slaughtered, or gone into captivity; so, in Bethlehem, the mothers lamented bitterly their children, because they were slain.”—Luther translates the words “in Ramah,” supposing them to mean in “the hill country.”

Theophilus. The number of infants slain by Herod is, I suppose, uncertain.

Reader. Quite so. Bethlehem was not a large place; and, although the slaughter extended to the parts adjacent, or the neighbourhood some distance round,—which is meant by “all the coasts thereof”—yet, all

things being considered, we may conclude that the number could not have been very large. Tradition, indeed, fixes the number at fourteen thousand! But this, as one commentator has well observed, is only an instance of the vanity of that most vain and deceitful guide; for even a populous city would not contain such a number of infants of two years old and under.

Theophilus. I see, more and more plainly, how vain and unprofitable it is, to attempt to become wise above what is written in matters of religion, and especially with reference to those matters of fact which are recorded in Holy Scripture.

READER. Let us endeavour to become wise, in a practical way, by that which has been written for our learning in the passage of Holy Scripture which has now been read.

Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth.—His crafty and dishonest policy having been defeated, he proceeded, in the next place, to acts of open enmity and violence. “Having played the fox before,” says Burkitt, “he acts the lion now.” And thus it often happens, that “when fraud and subtilty fail the enemies of the church, then they fall to open rage and barbarous inhumanity.”

But this act of cruelty, great and monstrous as it was, was not effectual for its purpose. The child Jesus was not destroyed, as Herod intended and hoped. The Lord had the tyrant in derision. And it is

for our comfort to reflect that the “counsel of the Lord” shall always “stand,” in opposition alike to the craft and the rage of his enemies. The promise of God to his faithful people is this,—“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” Ps. xci. 13.

Herod was exceeding wroth.—The word in the original is the same as that which the Septuagint employs to express the rage of Haman against Mordecai. Esth. iii. 5; v. 9. To what awful lengths of wickedness are men sometimes led by the indulgence of anger! Under the influence of this evil passion, if they yield to it, they are likely to commit sins of the deepest dye. “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous.” “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.” Prov. xxvii. 4; xiv. 29.

Herod had already received a check in his iniquitous designs by the disappointment which he had suffered. Was not this enough to divert him from his purpose? It might well have spoken to his conscience; and it ought to have deterred him from his crime. But no. Even the rebukes of God address themselves in vain to the heart of a hardened sinner. And “inveterate corruption,” so far from being allayed, “often swells the higher for the obstruction it meets with in a sinful pursuit.”

Herod sent forth, and slew all the children.—There is a neat remark by an early Christian writer, which has been transferred to the pages of a

commentator on our Book of Common Prayer, to the following effect,—that there are three kinds of martyrdom; the first both in will and deed, which is the highest; the second in will, but not in deed; the third in deed, but not in will. These infants were martyrs (if such they may be called) of the latter class. And, in one sense, they may be properly regarded as martyrs, that is, *suffering witnesses* to Christ, if we regard their death, although involuntary, as the fulfilment of inspired prophecy.

There are, especially, four points of view in which we may consider the slaughter of these children, in order to our practical benefit.

We may regard it, first, as the *act of a cruel and despotic tyrant*. And hence we should learn to be thankful that, through the good providence of God, we are not exposed to the same awful invasion of the rights of man, the same wanton exercise of irresponsible and unbridled power. Thanks be to God for the liberties of Britons, and the excellence of the British Constitution!

Secondly, we may contemplate this event as having taken place by *divine permission*.—"Let us not say, Where was the great Regent of the universe when such a horrible butchery was transacted? His all-wise counsels knew how to bring good out of all the evil of it. The agony of a few moments transmitted these oppressed innocents to peace and joy, while the impotent rage of Herod only heaped on his own head guilt, and infamy, and horror."

Thirdly, we may consider the

murder of the infants as a source of *grief and mourning to their parents*.

The heart of many a parent was wrung with anguish on this lamentable occasion. How soon may we be called to mourn over the death—perhaps, as we may suppose, the untimely death—of relatives and friends! Let us always be prepared for so solemn and painful an event. Let us walk in faith, hand in hand, and with united hearts, towards a higher and a better world! Concerning the tenants of that blissful region it has been written, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Rev. xxi. 4.

Fourthly, we may look at this circumstance with reference to the infants themselves. It was *an early* and, as men call it, a *premature death*. "It was no unrighteous thing in God to permit this; every life is forfeited to his justice as soon as it commences; that sin which entered by one man's disobedience introduced death with it; and we are not to suppose anything more than common guilt,—we are not to suppose that these children were sinners above all that were in Israel,—because they suffered such things. God's judgments are a great deep.

"But we must look upon this murder of the infants under another character; it was their martyrdom. How early did persecution commence against Christ and his kingdom! Think ye that he came to send peace

upon the earth? No; but a sword, such a sword as this (ch. x. 34, 35). The meaning of which passage is, not that such was the intention or design of Christ's coming, as to the counsels of God, but that such was one of its effects, through the corruption and wickedness of man. "A passive testimony was hereby given to the Lord Jesus.—They shed their blood for him who afterwards shed his for them.—If these infants were thus baptized with blood, though it were their own, into the church triumphant, it could not be said but that, with what they gained in heaven, they were abundantly recompensed for what they lost on earth."

HYMN.

Weep, weep not o'er thy children's tomb,
 Oh Rachel! weep not so:
 The bud is cropt by martyrdom,
 The flower in heaven shall blow.
 Firstlings of faith! the murderer's knife
 Hath miss'd its deadly aim;
 The God, for whom they gave their life,
 For them to suffer came.
 Though evil were their days and few,
 Baptis'd in blood and pain,
 He knows them whom they never knew,
 And they shall live again.
 Then weep not o'er thy children's tomb,
 Oh Rachel! weep not so:
 The bud is cropt by martyrdom,
 The flower in heaven shall blow.

HEBER.

§ IX.

CHAP. II. 19—23.

Herod dieth. Christ is brought back again into Galilee to Nazareth.

19 ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the

Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

o ch. iii. 13. Luke ii. 39—p John i. 45. q Judges xiii. 5. r Sam. i. 11.

Reader. Hence it appears that our Saviour's sojourn in Egypt was but of short duration. He did not remain in that country long enough to receive any part of his earthly education there; for he was taken back to Nazareth as "a young child," i.e. while he was yet an infant.

Theophilus. From the expression "they are dead," are we to conclude that others besides Herod were engaged in seeking the life of the infant Jesus, and that they had all been removed by the stroke of death?

Reader. It is, of course, probable that some of Herod's adherents were

ready to assist him in his wicked design, and God may have cut them all off by death.—Or the plural number may be here used in a general and indefinite sense, but referring strictly to Herod himself.—But there is, I think, a still better way of accounting for the plural form of expression in this place. The words appear to be a quotation from Exod. iv. 19, and so to contain an allusion, although without the usual note of reference, to what is said concerning Moses in that place;—hereby teaching us to regard Moses, in his flight from his enemies, as a type of the infant Redeemer in his flight from Herod.—In this respect, Herod may be viewed as a representative of all the enemies of Christ,—“they are dead which sought the young child’s life.”

Theophilus. I think I have understood that Herod was the last king of Judea,—but here it is said that Archelaus reigned in the room of his father.

Reader. It was the intention of Herod, expressed in his will, that Archelaus should succeed him as king; but Augustus, the Roman emperor, would not bestow upon him that title. He suffered him, however, to retain the government of Judea, Idumea, and Samaria, under the inferior title of ethnarch; and at the same time he gave Batanea, Trachonitis, &c., to Philip, and Galilee and Peræa to Antipas. Archelaus held his office only nine years; at the end of which time he was deposed and banished, and Judea was entirely reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

Theophilus. I suppose the conduct of Archelaus was very bad, and that this led to his deposition; especially as it is said that Joseph “was afraid” to return into Judea when he heard that Archelaus was in power.

Reader. Such is the fact. He made himself odious and intolerable by his acts of cruelty and oppression; and it was at the instance of the afflicted Jews that the emperor visited his crimes with the punishment I have mentioned.

Here let me call your attention to what is, perhaps, to be regarded as an incidental evidence of the credibility of the Gospel narrative. The Evangelist says nothing concerning the character or proceedings of Archelaus; but the fact of Joseph’s being afraid to come within his reach is in perfect accordance with the character of the tyrant, as it is displayed to us by common historians;—and the sacred writer, by thus dropping a hint, without attempting to account for the fact to which he alludes, appears to us in his true light, as one who was writing for persons who well understood the circumstances of the times of which he treated.

Why might Joseph have been expected to think of returning to Judea, in the first instance?

Theophilus. Because the infant had been born at Bethlehem; and because he knew that the Messiah was to be of the tribe of Judah.

Reader. And why would he naturally turn his thoughts to Galilee, in the next instance,—and especially to Nazareth?

Theophilus. Because,—as we learn from another Evangelist, although the fact is not mentioned by St. Matthew,—Nazareth was the place in which Mary, and probably Joseph also, originally resided. Luke i. 26, 27.

Reader. Here you may remark an incidental coincidence between the histories of the Evangelists.

Theophilus. It is said in the twenty-third verse that it “was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.” But we have not been able to trace this prophecy in any part of the Old Testament. Will you be pleased to help us out of our difficulty?

Reader. Some have supposed that the Evangelist here applies to the Messiah several passages of the Old Testament, containing appellations resembling that of Nazarene merely in sound. Thus they have referred to Gen. xli. 26, where it is said that Joseph should be “separate (Nexir) from, or a Nazarite among, his brethren.”—They regard Judges xiii. 5, “The child,” i.e. Samson, “shall be a Nazarite,” as pointing, in a more remote signification, to Christ.—And they suppose also that Isaiah xi. 1, in which our Saviour is foretold under the title of The Branch (Natzir), may be regarded as another passage of the prophets to which St. Matthew refers.—But I do not think that this view of the matter is consistent with the principles of sound interpretation.

Chrysostom thought that the predictions referred to by St. Matthew, were contained in some prophetic

writings which had been lost before his time. But this was merely his conjecture; and it is one which the more accurate criticism of the present day will not suffer us to adopt without obvious necessity.

I am inclined to agree with those interpreters who think that the Evangelist makes a general allusion to the sense or substance of predictions contained in several parts of the Old Testament, rather than to the precise words of any particular book or books. Now it had been foretold in more places than one that the Messiah would be despised and rejected by his contemporaries; and when the Evangelist wrote, the term “Nazarene” was proverbially employed as an expression of scorn or contempt. Having mentioned our Lord’s early abode at Nazareth, the Evangelist points out the fact of his having incurred the odium and contempt necessarily connected with a residence in that place, as being part of that humiliation which had been so expressly foretold by the voice of prophecy. “To be called a Nazarene was to be called a despicable man.—Now this was not particularly foretold by any one prophet; but, in general, it was *spoken by the prophets* that he should be *despised and rejected of men* (Isa. lxiii. 2, 3), *a worm and no man* (Ps. xxii. 6, 7), that he should be an *alien to his brethren*. Ps. lxix. 7, 8.”

In reading this chapter, we have more than once had occasion to discuss the Evangelist’s method of applying Old Testament prophecies to the person and history of Christ. I

therefore take this opportunity of reading to you four rules, drawn up by modern critics, according to which the phrase *that it might be fulfilled* may be applied in the New Testament, and according to one or other of which St. Matthew appears to have made all his quotations from prophecy.

RULE I. When the thing predicted is *literally* accomplished.

RULE II. When that is done, of which the Scripture has spoken not in a literal, but *in a spiritual, sense*.

RULE III. When a thing is not done either in a literal, or in a spiritual, sense, according to the fact referred to in the Scripture; but is *similar* to that fact.

RULE IV. When that which has been mentioned in the Old Testament as formerly done, is spoken of in the New Testament as accomplished in a *larger and more extensive sense*.

Theophilus. I will endeavour to bear these rules in mind, and to mark their application as instances occur.

READER. Upon this short passage of Scripture we may make various reflections, for the improvement of our hearts and regulation of our practice.

Herod was dead.—There is something affecting in this brief notice of the end of this man's earthly history; especially when we remember that Josephus, the Jewish historian, gives a most shocking account of the manner of his death. His power to persecute has ceased; and he is numbered among those concerning whom

the Preacher says "Their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." Eccl. ix. 6. Well may we read in these few words a powerful argument against the vain, disquieting, and sinful fear of man. "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? And where is the fury of the oppressor?" Isai. li. 12, 13.

When Herod was dead;—not before. So that the holy family remained until that time contentedly in Egypt. "They continued there until God gave the signal for their departure.—Let us, in like manner, remember that it is God's part to direct and ours to obey; nor can we be out of the way of safety and of comfort while we are following his directions, and steering our course by the intimations of his pleasure." "Oh how safe and satisfactory it is in all our ways to follow the call and command of God!"

An angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.—"Our intercourse with God, if it be kept up on our part, shall be kept up on his, wherever we are. No place can exclude God's gracious visits. Angels came to Joseph in Egypt, to Ezekiel in Babylon, and to John in Patmos."

He arose—and came into the land of Israel.—This strongly reminds me

of what we read in Gen. xii. 5, concerning faithful Abraham and his family,—“They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” Oh that the faith of Abraham and of Joseph may be ours throughout our earthly pilgrimage! “Did we but look upon the world as our Egypt, the place of our bondage and banishment, and heaven only as our Canaan, our home, our rest, we should as readily arise, and depart thither, when we are called for, as Joseph did out of Egypt.”

Being warned of God in a dream.

—This took place after Joseph had quitted Egypt, and was a farther intimation of the divine pleasure for the direction of his steps. Does it appear surprising that full instructions were not given to him at first, when the angel bade him arise, and depart? This is not really strange. God mercifully leads his people in the right way, *from one stage of their progress to another*; and he requires that they shall continually wait upon him, in the way of faith, of prayer, and of duty, in order to be guided and protected, from time to time, according to their circumstances and their need.

Being warned—he turned aside.—

God may sometimes see fit to bring his people into positions of difficulty or danger; but he never does so without a cause, or unless it be, in some way or other, good for them to be thus afflicted. He rather withdraws them from needless danger;—and he teaches them not to rush into it of their own accord.

He shall be called a Nazarene.—It was for our sake that the blessed Redeemer endured reproach, as well as pain. Let us not be unwilling to endure unmerited reproach and scorn, for his name's sake, if we should at any time be exposed to sufferings of this kind. “Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city; but we seek one to come.” Heb. xiii. 13, 14.

HYMN.

(Job viii. 11—22.)

The rush may rise where waters flow,
And flags beside the stream;
But soon their verdure fades and dies,
Before the scorching beam.

So is the sinner's hope cut off;
Or, if it transient rise,
'Tis like the spider's airy web,
From ev'ry breath that flies.

Fix'd on his house, he leans;
His house, and all its props, decay;
He holds it fast; but, while he holds,
The tott'ring frame gives way.

Fair, in his garden, to the sun
His boughs with verdure smile;
And, deeply fix'd, his spreading roots
Unshaken stand awhile.

But forth the sentence flies from Heaven,
That sweeps him from his place;
Which then denies him for its lord,
Nor owns it knew his face.

Lo! this the joy of wicked men,
Who Heav'n's high laws despise;
They quickly fall, and in their room,
As quickly others rise.

But for the just, with gracious care,
God will his power employ;
He'll teach their lips to sing his praise,
And fill their hearts with joy.

§ X.

CHAP. III. 1—12.

John preacheth. His office, life, and baptism. He reprehendeth the Pharisees and Sadducees.

IN those days came ^aJohn the Baptist, preaching ^bin the wilderness of Judæa,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for ^cthe kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, ^dThe voice of one crying in the wilderness, ^ePrepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And ^fthe same John ^ghad his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was ^hlocusts and ⁱwild honey.

5 ^kThen went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 ^lAnd were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, ^mO generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from ⁿthe wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore ¶ fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say with-

52

in yourselves, ^oWe have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: ^ptherefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 ^qI indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: ^rhe shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

12 ^sWhose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will ^tburn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

^a Mark i. 4, 15. Luke iii. 2, 3. John i. 28. ^b Josh. xiv. 10.—^c Dan. ii. 44. ch. iv. 17, & x. 7.—^d Is. xl. 3. Mark i. 3. Luke iii. 4. John i. 23. ^e Luke i. 76.—^f Mark i. 6. ^g 2 Kin. i. 8. Zech. xiii. 4. ^h Lev. xi. 22. ⁱ 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26.—^k Mark i. 5. Luke iii. 7.—^l Acts xix. 4, 18.—^m ch. xii. 34, & xxiii. 33. Luke iii. 7, 8, 9. ⁿ Rom. v. 9. 1 Thess. i. 10.—^o Or, answerable to amendment of life.—^p John viii. 33, 39. Acts xiii. 26. Romans iv. 1, 11, 16.—^q ch. vii. 19. Luke xiii. 7, 9. John xv. 6.—^r Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. John i. 15, 26, 33. Acts i. 5, xi. 16, & xix. 4. ^s Is. iv. 4, & xlv. 3. Mal. iii. 2. Acts ii. 3, 4. 1 Cor. xii. 13.—^t Mal. iii. 3. ^u Mal. iv. 1. ch. xiii. 30.

Reader. "In those days," namely, while our Lord continued to reside at Nazareth, John began his remarkable and divinely-appointed ministry. He came, we are told, "preaching;" that is, according to the force of the original, proclaiming something as a public crier,—speaking

ST. MATTHEW III. 1—12.

aloud, by authority, and inviting general attention, like a herald. He was, indeed, a herald of the King of kings.

Theophilus. Does the appearance of John in the wilderness of Judea give any sanction to the lives of hermits or recluses?

Reader. Certainly not. Their retirement into a wilderness is no imitation of the Baptist; at least, it is a following of the example of this holy man no farther than it is an adoption of the conduct of a certain seducer of whom we read in Acts xxi. 38; for it is said that he "led his followers into the wilderness."

The place in which John preached was not altogether uncultivated or uninhabited. It was a mountainous and thinly-populated part of Judea, but it contained hamlets and even towns. Thus, in Joshua xv. 61, 62, we read of six cities or towns in a part of the country called the desert or wilderness.

Theophilus. While you were reading the second verse, it occurred to me that, although we often find the expression "kingdom of heaven" or "kingdom of God" in the New Testament, yet we never meet with it in the Old.

Reader. This phrase, which became current among the Jews after the completion of the Old Testament Scriptures, appears, however, to have been founded by them upon certain expressions in the prophecies of Daniel, in which it is said that the "God of heaven" should "set up a kingdom," and that "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," were given

to "one like the Son of Man." Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14. In the apocryphal book of Wisdom (x. 10), we find the expression "kingdom of God;" and in later Jewish writings, the terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are common.

Theophilus. What are we to understand by these expressions in the New Testament?

Reader. Sometimes they describe the Church on earth, and sometimes the perfection and happiness of the future state. Or rather, I would say, they present to our minds one great idea, under various phases or modifications. They denote the divine supremacy over men's wills and persons throughout the whole course of its development, beginning within men's hearts, and extending to their outward circumstances and to external nature,—beginning with individuals, and spreading through the whole mass of mankind, or over the whole surface of society. Or, to speak at once more fully and precisely, by the kingdom of God, or of heaven, we are to understand the Church of Christ in all the various stages of its progress towards perfection;—that state of things in which God in Christ is acknowledged and served by a body of faithful people, and which will eventually issue in the complete establishment and universal acknowledgment of divine authority, perfect conformity to the divine will, and abundant manifestation of the divine glory,—in one word, in the holiness and happiness of heaven. "The kingdom of heaven," says Baxter, "is a special go-

vernment of God by a Saviour sent from heaven to lead men to heaven."

We may thus apprehend the full meaning of this general and most significant expression. Of course, the precise import of the term must vary a little in different places where it occurs, according to its connection, and according to the prominence which may be given to some particular part of the whole complex idea.

Theophilus. The application of the prophecy which the Evangelist quotes appears obvious and simple. I suppose it involves no peculiar difficulty.

Reader. It is taken from the prophecies of Isaiah, or as the name is here given, in the Greek form, Esaias (xl. 3). In its primary sense, it refers to the return of the Jews to their own country after their liberation by the king of Persia. In its secondary and farther signification, —equally according to the prophetic design of the Holy Spirit,—it points to John the Baptist, in his work of preparing the Jews to receive Christ, by exhorting them to repentance, and by bearing testimony to his person as the Messiah.—Do you understand the allusion to an oriental custom which runs through this passage?

Theophilus. The reference is to the work of pioneers employed in opening the passes, levelling or raising the roads, and removing obstructions for a monarch when about to march through a marshy or mountainous district.

Reader. I have before me an extract from Diodorus Siculus (lib. 2),

being part of his description of the march of Semiramis into Media and Persia; which I will read to you, as containing a lively illustration of this passage of Holy Scripture.—“In her march to Ecbatane,” says the historian, “she came to the Zarean mountains, which, extending many furlongs, and being full of *craggy precipices* and *deep hollows*, could not be passed without fetching a great compass. Therefore, being desirous of leaving a lasting memorial of herself, as well as of shortening the road, she ordered the *precipices to be digged down*, and the *hollows to be filled up*; and, at a great expense, she made a shorter and more expeditious passage, which, to this day, is called The Road of Semiramis. Afterwards, she went into Persia, and all the other countries of Asia subject to her dominion; and, wherever she went, she ordered the *mountains and precipices to be levelled*, raised *causeways in the plain country*, and, at a great expense, made the roads passable.”

In like manner, the ministry of John was appointed for the purpose of bringing down the haughty spirit of the proud, and raising the grovelling minds of the carnal and thoughtless, and thus preparing them for the reception of the great God and their Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The mention of the Baptist's dress and appearance, in the fourth verse, reminds us of what is said concerning one of the old prophets in particular. Can either of you tell me to which prophet I allude?

Mary. His hair-cloth and girdle

ST. MATTHEW III. 1—12.

remind us of Elijah (2 Kings i. 8); —and our blessed Lord said expressly, concerning John, “This is Elias which was to come.” Mat. xi. 14.

Reader. You must not be surprised at reading that John ate locusts; for we are told by several authors, ancient and modern, that there is a kind of locust in the East which is used as an article of food, especially by poor people. Indeed, the permission anciently given to the Jews to adopt this kind of food proves that the use of it existed from very early times.—Read Lev. xi. 22.

Mary. “Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind.”

Reader. You can easily understand what the wild honey was, which the Baptist used. It was such as was found in the clefts of rocks, or in the hollow parts of trees; and in this, as some suppose, the dried locusts were fried, when prepared for food.

Theophilus. I believe the ceremony of baptism was not entirely new and unknown at this time.

Reader. Some suppose that it had been already in use among the Jews on occasion of receiving proselytes, especially such proselytes as did not submit to circumcision. And therefore, say they, by baptizing Jews, and thus treating them as proselytes, John marked his ministry as the introduction of a new economy.—Others, however, think that baptism, properly so called,—that is, the lus-

tration of a proselyte by another person, had not previously existed, and that nothing more than ceremonial ablutions—the act of the individuals themselves—had been in use.—Perhaps there are no sufficient means of determining this question.—At all events, the baptism performed by John was not any arbitrary act, or one of his own invention; for he was “sent to baptize with water.” John i. 33.

As the mention of Pharisees and Sadducees occurs for the first time in this passage, I will request Theophilus to read a page to which I point, containing an account of these two leading Jewish parties.

Theophilus. “THE PHARISEES derived their name from the Hebrew word Pharash, which signifies ‘to set apart, or to separate,’ because they separated themselves from the rest of their countrymen, to peculiar strictness in religion. Their leading tenets were the following:—that the world is governed by fate, or by a fixed decree of God; that the souls of men were immortal, and were either eternally happy or miserable beyond the grave; that the dead would be raised; that there were angels, good and bad; that God was under obligation to bestow peculiar favour on the Jews; and that they were justified by the merits of Abraham. They were proud and self-righteous; and they held the common people in great contempt. John vii. 49. They sought the offices of the state, and affected great dignity. They were ostentatious in their religious worship, and even in their

dress; praying at the corners of the streets, and seeking publicity in the bestowment of alms. They sought principally external cleanness; and dealt much in ceremonial ablutions and washing.

"In addition to the written law, they adhered to the traditions of the elders, which they vainly supposed to have been handed down from Moses.—They were, in general, a corrupt, hypocritical, office-seeking, haughty class of men. There were, however, some among them of a better character. See Acts v. 14.

"THE SADDUCEES are supposed to have taken their name from Sadoc, who flourished about 260 years before the Christian era. He was a pupil of Antigonus Sochæus, president of the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. He had taught the duty of serving God disinterestedly, without the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment. Hence Sadoc, incorrectly, drew the inference that there was no future state of rewards or punishments; and on this belief he founded the sect..... They held that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit (Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8); and that the soul of man perishes with the body;..... and they rejected all traditions."

Reader. The Pharisees, as they appear before us in the New Testament, are to be regarded as representatives of superstition, hypocrisy, and self-righteous pride; the Sadducees, of worldliness, sensual indulgence, and unbelief.—"The Pharisees," says a judicious commentator,

"were zealots for the ceremonies, for the power of the church, and the traditions of the elders; the Sadducees ran into the other extreme, and were little better than *deists*, denying the existence of spirits, and of a future state."

When St. John saw these men come to his baptism—(the Æthiopic version adds, *privately*)—he addressed them in language strongly expressive of his abhorrence of their character as the very personification of inveterate and malicious wickedness. And he inquired, with astonishment, who had warned them to flee from the impending wrath. Hence, then, it appears that neither of these parties came in a right disposition of mind, or with proper views. The Pharisees were proud of their supposed superiority in piety and virtue, and of their relation to Abraham; the Sadducees were vain of their fancied wisdom and philosophical attainments; and all were alike unprepared to become disciples of the uncompromising Baptist, or of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Theophilus. Did the Baptist allude to any particular stones or rocks, when he said what we read in the ninth verse?

Reader. Perhaps he then pointed to the stones which lay scattered about in the rough and rocky desert. Or, as he was baptizing at the ford of Jordan, where Israel passed over, some have thought that he alluded to the twelve stones which were set up as a memorial of that event. Josh. iv. 20. But before we could adopt the latter opinion, we should

require proof that the ancient monument had continued in its place until the Baptist's time. At all events, the meaning is clear and certain. St. John assured his hearers that, rather than that the promises of God should fail, and rather than that proud, impenitent, unbelieving sinners should partake of the blessings promised to the real, spiritual posterity of Abraham, God would raise up others who should tread in his footsteps, and thus become his children, even, if necessary, by the most unlikely means;—that He would raise up children to Abraham even from among the Gentiles, whom the Jews may have thought as unlikely to receive that privilege as the senseless rocks which they saw around them, or the stones beneath their feet.

The Jews falsely gloried in their descent from Abraham; regarding it as securing to them an immunity from punishment. That descent, however, rightly considered, ought not to have been regarded as a privilege, in and of itself; but rather as an obligation and excitement to a godly life and conversation.

Theophilus. By "the axe laid unto the root of the trees" we are to understand, I suppose, the Romans, whose power was ready to crush the guilty city and nation of the Jews.

Reader. Such seems to be the primary meaning of the expression; which may also be understood as referring to future and eternal judgments ready to fall upon the wicked.

Mary. How long did St. John continue to preach?

Reader. The period of his ministry, probably, did not exceed six months,—which was the distance of time between the commencement of his preaching, and of that of our blessed Lord.—Can you explain that phrase, in the eleventh verse, "whose shoes I am not worthy to bear?"

Mary. It is an allusion to the custom of slaves carrying their master's sandals. The sandal was a piece of wood or leather, fitted to the soles of the feet, and fastened by thongs of leather. And it was the business of certain slaves, of the lowest class, to remove these sandals from their masters' feet, and to take charge of them, while the wearers were reclining at table, or otherwise stationary in the house.

Theophilus. I am not sure that I rightly understand the meaning of that saying, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

Reader. Some suppose that this expression alludes to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were poured out upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and were afterwards imparted, through the instrumentality of the Apostles, to other believers. You remember the appearance of "tongues like as of fire" on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 3.—Others regard the words "with the Holy Ghost and fire" (for in the original the preposition is not repeated) as referring to the spiritual influences of the divine agent, set forth under the similitude of fire. "The Holy Spirit," say they, "is represented here under the image of fire, because he was to illuminate and invigorate

the soul, penetrate every part, and assimilate the whole to the image of the God of glory." Perhaps this interpretation is the most satisfactory.

—Others explain the "fire" as relating to the threatened visitation of divine judgment;—a view which is supported, in some degree, by the mention of "unquenchable fire" in this connection, in the next verse. "He shall baptize, not only with water, but with the pouring out of his Spirit on believers, and with that fiery trial, which shall refine the gold, the faithful, but separate the dross, and destroy the rebellious unbelievers."—Some expositors combine all these ideas; supposing fire to be in this place an emblem both of the operations of the Holy Spirit, and of judgment upon the impenitent and unbelieving. "St. John," say they, "declares that Christ should plentifully pour down of the *gifts* and *graces* of the Holy Spirit upon his proselytes, which, like fire in their operation, should purify their hearts from sin, consuming their lusts and corruptions; but that, at the same time, he has a *fiery indignation, and flaming judgments*, to destroy and burn up impenitent sinners like combustible stubble."

Theophilus. Do you remember what view of the matter is taken by early Christian writers?

Reader. Some of them take one or other of the views already mentioned; but the speculations of "the Fathers" on this passage are, in many instances, deplorably childish and frivolous. Nay, more; they contain the foundation of a doctrine con-

cerning a fictitious purgatorial fire, which soon became a fashionable subject of belief in the corrupt churches of antiquity.

Theophilus. How thankful we ought to be that we have been taught to interpret Scripture by itself, and by the rules of sound criticism,—and reverently to avoid attempting to explain it by the reveries of fancy, or by the light of a false philosophy!

READER. May we, by the divine blessing, learn much from this remarkable portion of sacred history!

Repent ye!—That was the substance of the Baptist's preaching. Turn from your evil thoughts, corrupt inclinations, and wicked ways, to the love and service of the holy and heart-searching God! Such is the nature of real repentance. "True penitents have other thoughts of God and Christ, of sin and holiness, of this world and the other, than they have had; and they stand otherwise affected towards them. The change of the mind produces a change of the way. This repentance is a necessary duty, in obedience to the command of God (Acts xvii. 30); and a necessary preparation and qualification for the comforts of the Gospel of Christ."

For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Time is short,—the Judge is at the door,—and there is no room for delay.—Besides this, encouraging motives to repentance are contained in the hopes of pardon and acceptance held out, through divine mercy and grace, under the gospel covenant. "The free and full tenders of grace in the gospel are most alluring argu-

ments to move a sinner to repent and to turn to God."

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.—

"There is a great deal to be done, to make way for the entrance of Christ into a soul, to *bow the heart* for the reception of the Son of David (2 Sam. xix. 14); and nothing is more needful, in order to this, than the discovery of sin, and a conviction of the insufficiency of our own righteousness. Prejudices must be removed, high thoughts brought down, and captivated to the obedience of Christ."

Prepare ye the way.—This preparation must indeed be effected by the power of God;—but yet man, weak as he is, has his part to perform. "Though it be grace that prepareth for further grace, man's duty must be used thereunto; and the exalting work of grace presupposeth the humbling work of repentance, as a necessary preparation."

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the regions round about Jordan.—The rejection of the Messiah by the great body of the Jews makes it appear to how little purpose they had heard the exhortations of his forerunner. So also, in the present day, "there may be a multitude of forward hearers, where there are but few true believers. Curiosity, and affectation of novelty and variety, may bring many to attend upon good preaching, and to be affected with it for awhile, who are yet never subject to the power of it (Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32)."—May we, by God's grace, be not only hearers, but also doers, of the word!

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for

repentance, i.e. suitable to it,—such as may manifest the conversion and renovation of your hearts.—"As the body without the spirit, and as faith without works, is dead, so repentance without fruit is dead also." "Repentance is seated in the heart. There it is as a root; but in vain do we pretend to have it there, if we do not bring forth the fruits of it in a universal reformation, forsaking all sin, and cleaving to that which is good. It becomes penitents to be humble and low in their own eyes, to be thankful for the least mercy, and patient under the greatest affliction, to be watchful against all appearances of sin and approaches towards it, to abound in every duty, and to be charitable in judging others." These are fruits worthy of repentance.

Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.—God observes what passes within men's hearts, their hidden principles, secret hopes, and matters of private confidence.—Here is a warning to us all not to rest satisfied with the mere possession of outward privileges, with bearing a religious name, or with the credit and advantages of church-membership. Our duty and happiness consist, not in the possession, but in the due use and improvement, of these blessings. Many, it is to be feared, who pride themselves upon belonging to this or that church, and who rest in the supposed benefit of their connection with a body of professing Christians, will come short of heaven.—Nor will the mere circumstance of our connection with

pious relatives and friends be of any avail to us. "What though we be descended from pious ancestors; have been blessed with a religious education; have had our lot cast in families where the fear of God is uppermost, and have good friends to advise us, and pray for us; what will all this avail us, if we do not repent, and live a life of repentance;"—that is to say, —if we do not give our hearts to God, and live like the children of our heavenly Father?

The axe is laid unto the root of the trees.—"They whose hearts are not pierced with the sword of God's word, shall certainly be cut down and destroyed by the axe of his judgments." And the threatening extends to *every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit*. The barren tree, as well as that which brings forth bad fruit, is in danger. Remember the parable of the barren fig-tree. Well may we pray to God to forgive us our sins! We should be on our guard against omission of duty as well as against the commission of ungodliness in act and deed.

He that cometh after me is mightier than I.—This is a thought in which all ministers of Christ may thankfully rejoice; trusting that *his strength* will be made perfect in *their weakness*, not only in their individual experience, but with regard to the work and success of their ministry.

Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.—Let us take a lesson from John's humility. "Those whom God puts honour upon, are made very humble and low in their own eyes; willing to be abased, so that Christ may be

magnified; to be anything, to be nothing, so that Christ may be all."

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.—It is the prerogative of Christ to bestow the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. It is the office of the Holy Spirit, in the work of sanctification, to convince of sin, to enlighten the understanding, to renew the soul, to strengthen and comfort the believer, to sustain his hope, and to inflame his love to God, and zeal in God's service. May this sacred fire ever more and more shine into our hearts, kindle our affections, and consume the dross of our corruptions!

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. "In a floor there is straw as well as grain, chaff as well as corn, tares as well as wheat, cockle and darnel as well as good seed. Thus in the church, on earth, there is, and will be, a mixture of good and bad, saints and sinners, hypocrites and sincere Christians." But Christ will fan this floor, and purge out all its corruptions. "Something of this kind is often done in this world, when God calls his people out of Babylon; Rev. xvii. 4. But it is the day of the last judgment that will be the great winnowing, distinguishing day, which will infallibly determine concerning doctrines and works (1 Cor. iii. 13), and concerning persons (Matt. xxv. 32, 33), when saints and sinners shall be parted for ever."

He will gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.—"Heaven is the garner into which Jesus Christ

ST. MATTHEW III. 13—17.

will shortly gather all his wheat, and not a grain of it shall be lost. In heaven the saints are brought together, and no longer scattered; they are safe and no longer exposed; separated from corrupt neighbours without, and from corrupt affections within, and there is no chaff among them.—Hell is the unquenchable fire, which will burn up the chaff; and this will certainly be the portion and punishment and everlasting destruction of hypocrites and unbelievers.—So that here are life and death, good and evil, set before us; according as we now are in the field, we shall then be in the floor.”

HYMN.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art
Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above,
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home:
Where thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And thee, of both, to be but One.
That, through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song:—
Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ORDINATION SERVICE.

§ XI.

CHAP. III. 13—17.

John baptizeth Christ in Jordan.

13 ¶ “Then cometh Jesus

“from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw “the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

“ Mark i. 9. Luke iii. 21. “ ch. ii. 22.—“ Mark i. 10. s. 15. xi. 2. & xiii. 1. Luke iii. 22. John i. 32, 33.—“ John xii. 28. “ Ps. ii. 7. Is. xlii. 1. ch. xli. 15. & xvii. 5. Mark i. 11. Luke ix. 35. Eph. i. 6. Col. i. 13. 2 Pet. i. 17.

Reader. The great principle of duty, in accordance with which our blessed Lord submitted to the baptism of John, was this, that it became him, and his followers, to “fulfil all righteousness,”—to own, and put honour on, every religious institution of divine appointment. It became him, as man, to comply with a call given by a divinely commissioned teacher. Perhaps also, say some, he saw fit to act, in this instance, as the representative of sinful men; and he may also have designed it as a formal consecration or dedication to his office, according to the manner of

the priests under the ceremonial law. Exod. xxix. 4.

Theophilus. It is said, v. 16, that "he saw the Spirit of God descending." Does that refer to Jesus or to John?

Reader. The pronoun in this place, and in Mark i. 10, seems to refer to Jesus; but it is certain, from John i. 12, that the Baptist also beheld this remarkable appearance,—the visible symbol of the peculiar presence of the Holy Spirit.

Mary. It is said that Jesus "went up—out of the water." This implies that he had been immersed, does it not?

Reader. We shall have occasion to speak of the original mode of administering baptism hereafter. But it is remarkable, that the original expression in this place, and in Mark i. 10, is, that our Lord went up not out of the water, but from the water. If a person were plunged into the water, then it would be natural to say that he afterwards went up out of the water; but if he were taken, or went, down to the water, or the water's edge, then we should say that he afterwards went up from the water. And such is the Evangelist's expression in this place.

Theophilus. Do you suppose that the shape, or likeness, of a dove was assumed by the Holy Spirit on this occasion?

Reader. It appears, from Luke iii. 23, that this must be the meaning of the sacred writer; although some commentators suppose that the form assumed was that of fire, or some luminous body, and that the

words, "like a dove," denote that it came down with a motion resembling the descent of that bird.

Theophilus. There is something very solemn and affecting in the announcement of our Saviour's person and character by "a voice from heaven."

Reader. And you remember, perhaps, on what other occasions this voice was repeated.—It was heard, for the second time, on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 5; Luke ix. 35, 36; 2 Pet. i. 17);—and, for the third and last time, shortly before our Saviour's crucifixion (John xii. 28—30).

Theophilus. "Why did the Holy Spirit descend upon Christ, seeing that he was truly and really God?"

Reader. Remember that he was man as well as God; otherwise he could not have sustained that illustrious character, "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." At his baptism, the Holy Ghost descended, "first, for the designation of his person, to show that he was the person set apart for the work and office of the Mediator; secondly, for the qualification of his person for the performance of his office. This was Christ's unction (Isa. vi. 1), when he was anointed above his fellows, to be the king, prophet, and priest of his church." Ps. xlv. 6, 7. He is the Head of his church; and through him the Spirit is derived to all believers.

Theophilus. I think I have heard this passage quoted, as one among many others, in support of the scrip-

ST. MATTHEW III. 13—17.

tural doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Unity.

Reader. Yes. "At the baptism of our great High Priest, there was an exhibition to the senses of the Three Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity, each acting according to the economy of the scheme of redemption; the Father appointing the Son to be Mediator, the Son accepting the appointment, and the Holy Spirit anointing him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and qualifying him for the work he had undertaken." "It is impossible to explain this transaction consistently in any other way than by admitting this truth, that there are three equal persons in the divine nature, or essence, and that each of these sustains an important part in the work of redeeming men."

READER. Let us now consider this history in some practical points of view.

Then cometh Jesus—unto John.—"How dares the greatest upon earth despise the ministry of man, being appointed by God, which Christ honoured in his own person, and graced with his own presence!"

John forbid him.—So also did St. Peter, when our Lord went about to wash his feet (John xiii. 6—8). "Christ's gracious condescensions are so surprising, as to appear at first incredible to the strongest believers; so deep and mysterious, that even those who know his mind well cannot soon find out the meaning of them, but, by reason of darkness,

start objections against the will of Christ."

I have need to be baptized of thee.

It is said of John that "he was filled with the Holy Ghost" from his very infancy. (Luke i. 15). But "they who have much of the Spirit of God, yet, while here, in this imperfect state, see that they have need of more, and need to apply themselves to Christ for more." "The more holy a person is, the more sensible he is of his unholiness; where there is most grace, there is the greatest sense of the want of grace,"—the deepest conviction of remaining impurity and imperfection, and the most earnest desire for final and complete deliverance.—John made this confession in public, and in the presence of those who had a high opinion of his character and dignity. Let not our honour, or our desire of esteem, make us ashamed to acknowledge our need of Christ.

Comest thou to me?—How lovely is the conduct of the Baptist, as a picture of humility! Such also was the humility of his pious mother;—"Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke i. 43).—But God delights to honour and exalt the lowly: and he "has farther honour in store for those whose spirits continue low when their reputation rises."

Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.—This conduct becomes us, as the disciples of our Lord and Master. "They who are of greatest attainments in gifts and graces, should yet, in their place, bear their testimony to instituted ordinances, by a

humble and diligent attendance on them; that they may give a good example to others," as well as that they may themselves receive the appointed and expected blessing.

Then he suffered him.—Here observe that "the same modesty which made John at first decline the honour Christ offered him, now made him do the service Christ enjoined him." And hence we may learn, for the guidance of our own conduct, that no pretence of humility will excuse our declining, or retiring from, a duty which we may be summoned to fulfil.

Lo, the heavens were opened unto him.—And, in one sense, not unto him alone. "In and through Jesus Christ, the heavens are opened to the children of men. Sin shut up heaven, put a stop to all friendly intercourse between God and man; but now Christ has 'opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.' Divine light and love are darted down upon the children of men, and we have boldness to enter into the holiest. We have receipts of mercy from God, we make returns of duty to God; and all by Jesus Christ, who is the ladder that has its foot on earth and its top in heaven, by whom alone it is that we have any comfortable correspondence with God, or any hope of getting to heaven at last."

Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.—Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, by eternal generation (Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3); by supernatural conception (Luke i. 35); and by special appointment to

the office and work of the Redeemer (Ps. lxxxix. 27; Rom. i. 4).—He is the *beloved* of the Father;—his dear Son, or the Son of his love, as it is elsewhere expressed (Col. i. 13).—And the consideration of this truth may well be a source of great comfort and encouragement to us, as believers in his name. As such we are *accepted in the Beloved*; Eph. i. 6. Yes:—"Let all the world take notice, that this is the Peacemaker, the Daysman, who has laid his hand upon us both; and that there is no coming to God as a Father, but by Christ as a Mediator; John xiv. 6. In him our *spiritual sacrifices* are *acceptable*, for he is the altar that sanctifieth every gift; 1 Pet. ii. 5. Out of Christ, God is a consuming fire; but, in Christ, a reconciled Father. This is the sum of the whole Gospel; it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that God has declared, by a voice from heaven, that Jesus Christ is his *beloved Son in whom he is well pleased*; with which we must by *faith* cheerfully concur, and say, that he is our beloved Saviour, in whom we are well pleased,"—in whose hands we are willing to entrust our highest interests, and to whose governance and guidance we are willing to yield ourselves, in body, soul, and spirit.

HYMN.

Jesus, how precious is thy name!
Beloved of the Father Thou!
Oh, let me catch th' immortal flame
With which angelic bosoms glow.
As angels love thee, I would love,
And imitate the bless'd above.

ST. MATTHEW IV. 1—11.

My Prophet Thou, my heavenly guide,
Thy sweet instructions I will hear:
The words that from thy lips proceed,
Oh, how divinely sweet they are!
Thee, my great Prophet, I would love,
And imitate the bless'd above.

My great High Priest, whose precious blood
Did once atone upon the cross,
Who now dost intercede with God,
And plead the friendless sinner's cause;
In Thee I trust; Thee would I love,
And imitate the bless'd above.

My King supreme, to thee I bow,
A willing subject at thy feet;
All other lords I disavow,
And to thy government submit:
My Saviour-king this heart would love,
And imitate the bless'd above.

DAVIDS.

§ XII.

CHAP. IV. 1—11.

THEN was ^a Jesus led up of ^b the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, ^c Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up ^d into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

K

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, ^e He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, ^f Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, ^g Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, ^h angels came and ministered unto him.

^a Mark i. 12, &c. Luke iv. 1, &c. ^b See 1 Kings xviii. 12. Ezek. iii. 14, & viii. 3, & xi. 1, 24, & xi. 2, & xliii. 5. Acts viii. 39.—^c Deut. viii. 3.—^d Neh. xi. 1, 18. Is. xlviii. 2, & lii. 1; ch. xxvii. 55. Rev. xi. 2.—^e Ps. xci. 11, 12.—^f Deut. vi. 16.—^g Deut. vi. 13, & x. 20. Josh. xxiv. 14. 1 Sam. vii. 3.—^h Heb. i. 14.

Reader. Do any questions arise in your minds respecting this remarkable portion of the sacred narrative?

Theophilus. In what manner may we suppose this Temptation to have been conducted? And in what form did the Tempter appear?

ST. MATTHEW IV. 1—11.

Reader. It is sufficient for us to know, that we have here the history of *a real event*, not of a mere vision or dream; and that the temptation presented itself to our Lord *from without*, not being in any way the produce of his own pure and holy mind. We read of what our blessed Lord, in his conflict with evil, actually saw, and heard, and did, and said.

We cannot suppose that the Tempter appeared in his own character. Many think that he assumed a human form; or that he appeared as an angel.—For my own part, I think it clear, from Luke iv. 6, that, in the third part of the temptation, Satan professed to be the Guardian Angel of Judea. It seems probable also that, in the second part, he professed to be an angel of light; implying that he was at hand, as one of those of whom it had been written “He shall give his angels charge over thee.” Perhaps it was one part of Satan’s policy to pretend to greater and greater degrees of excellence and authority in the successive stages of his temptation, with a view to gain influence over the object of his assault. He may have appeared first as a man, a weary traveller in the wilderness; then, having failed in his first attack, and having prevailed on our Lord to accompany him to the roof of the Temple, he may have declared himself an angel, charged with the protection of good men; and lastly, in order to hold out a still more powerful inducement to the mind of his intended victim, he may have professed himself to be an

angel of a high order, even the Prince or Guardian Angel of Judea, and may have offered to transfer to Jesus the exercise of his authority on condition of his receiving personal homage. But this is merely my own conjecture.

Theophilus. How did the Tempter convey our Lord from place to place?

Reader. Some interpreters, in times past, hastily concluded that he carried his sacred person through the air;—a supposition which suited the purpose of painters much more than it tended to the promulgation of truth.—The word translated “taketh him” in vv. 5, 8, is that which is used by Greek writers to express the act of a person who induces another to accompany him to a certain place. St. Matthew himself employs this word again in ch. xvii. 1,—“Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain.” Did you ever imagine that our Lord carried these disciples through the air?—The truth is, all that the Evangelist says in the chapter now before us is, that Satan *induced our Lord to go to the Temple, and to the mountain, in his company.*

Theophilus. What is meant by the “pinnacle of the Temple” in ver. 5?

Reader. Probably a part of the balustrade surrounding the roof;—or, a high, tower-like part of the building, with a flat roof, forming a wing, or side, of the Temple. Some suppose it to have been a part called The King’s Gallery, built by Herod, looking over a deep part of the valley beneath. But this is uncertain.

ST. MATTHEW IV. 1—11.

Mary. Do you think that our Lord was really taken up into a mountain?

Reader. The Evangelist says that he was, and therefore I know it as a fact. I cannot agree with those interpreters who suppose that the eighth verse describes only something which took place in the way of vision, or by an impression made on the imagination. The Tempter induced our Lord to go with him to the top of some lofty mountain, commanding an extensive prospect of the provinces of the holy land; and then, having caused him to reflect upon the fertility, and various resources, of the country, he made him an offer of dominion over this beautiful region, as a stepping-stone to universal empire.

Travellers say that there is a very high mountain in the wilderness of Judea, which commands an extensive prospect of the holy land.—Perhaps we may obtain a just idea of the meaning of the verse in question, by comparing it with what is said concerning the view enjoyed by Moses from Mount Nebo.—Read, at your leisure, Deut. xxxiv. 1—3. Some suppose that our blessed Saviour stood on the same spot, the top of Pisgah.

Theophilus. I collect, from your remarks, that you do not think such particulars of any importance; but that you advise us to regard the whole transaction as bearing the stamp of plain reality.

READER. This is the narrative

of a real transaction; not the record of a series of phantoms. Let us look at it in some practical points of view.

Here we discover our great Champion and Redeemer, our second head and representative, engaged in a conflict with that evil and seducing spirit who was successful in his assault upon our first parents. We see Christ victorious, and the Tempter defeated; and thus we behold a pattern and a pledge of our own triumph in the spiritual warfare, if we resist the adversary of our souls, in humble dependence on divine strength.

Hence, too, we are encouraged to remember, not only that the Captain of our Salvation is "able to succour them that are tempted," but also that he can sympathise with them in their sorrows, and can have compassion on them, from his own personal acquaintance with the trials that beset them. Heb. ii. 18.

Nor should we omit to consider this temptation as an instance of our Lord's great condescension, and deep humiliation, on our behalf. It was, doubtless, a part of his sufferings to endure the presence of ungodly suggestions, not indeed in his mind, but yet directly addressed to it from without, and seeking to gain admission. It was, to say the least, an insult which he endured for our sake. Let us feel grateful to him for all that he suffered, and for all that he performed, and is ready to perform, on our behalf!

Then was Jesus led up.—When was this? Soon after he had been baptized, and had received a testi-

mony in his favour by a voice from heaven! Neither our religious privileges, nor any tokens of divine favour, will secure us from being tempted. The exercise of such privileges, and the possession of such singular blessings, may be speedily followed by some heavy assaults of our spiritual enemy. God may see fit to send something to try us, or to keep us humble, after we have received great honours or comforts; just as a "thorn in the flesh" was sent as "a messenger of Satan" to buffet the Apostle Paul, after he had been caught up into the third heaven.

Then;—soon after a solemn attestation had been given to the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus. What better preparation for temptation, or defence against it, can we have, than an assurance, on scriptural grounds, that we are indeed the sons of God, living under his protection, and in possession of his favour!

Then;—just before his entrance upon the work of his public ministry. Are we about to engage in any important work, especially in any undertaking on behalf of God and religion? Let us remember, that we are exposed to peculiar temptations, according to our circumstances. "My son," says the son of Sirach, "if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thyself for temptation." Eccles. ii. 1.

Jesus was *led up by the Spirit*; i. e. under the influence, or by an impulse, of the Holy Spirit. Hence it has been truly remarked that "our care must be not to enter into temptation; but, if God, by his providence,

order us into circumstances of temptation for our trial, we must not think it strange, but double our guard."

Our Lord was thus *led by the Spirit* as into a field of battle. This conflict was a part of the great contest between Christ and Satan, beforehand determined and foretold. Gen. iii. 17. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Into the wilderness.—Even in solitude temptation may approach us.

To be tempted of the devil.—In the temptations to which our Lord was exposed on this occasion, the allurements of *pleasure*, or of *present and apparent good*, were brought to bear upon his soul, with concentrated force. He afterwards engaged in conflict with temptations incident upon a dread of *pain*, or of *present and apparent evil*, which combined, with all their power, towards the close of his ministry, and more especially when he was taken with wicked hands to be crucified and slain. But neither the love of pleasure nor the dread of pain availed to seduce him from his innocence and holy integrity. He overcame temptation in all its essential varieties of form.

It has been remarked that, of the three temptations in the wilderness, the first was addressed to the purely sensual principle of human nature, the second to the purely intellectual principle, and the third to the two combined. Perhaps this observation is more ingenious than solid. But it is right for us to remember that temptation presents itself sometimes to one faculty, and sometimes to an-

ST. MATTHEW IV. 1—11.

other. And we should be on our guard accordingly.

He was afterward an hungred.—Satan watches for his advantage, or for a good opportunity of presenting his temptations.

Extreme want or distress exposes men to the power of some temptations. When good men are suffering temporal privations, they ought to stand upon their guard, and to pray for grace, against the peculiar dangers of their situation. "In all time of our tribulation, good Lord, deliver us."

Observe, when our Lord was tempted, he was an hungred. Our first parents, when they were assaulted, were in a well-stored garden, where they had means of enjoying a plentiful supply of food, if they had religiously abstained from taking the forbidden fruit. But Jesus was in a wilderness, and destitute of any apparent means of subsistence, to be obtained in a lawful way. How much more has he done than merely to restore what we lost by Adam's fall!

If thou be the Son of God.—None so holy as to escape temptation;—even incarnate Deity was assailed by it.

A voice from heaven had declared, "This is my beloved Son."—Satan would have led Jesus to doubt the truth of God's word,—to doubt concerning his own character,—to fall into distrust and impatience.—He would induce us to commit the same sins;—to dispute God's word (Hath God said so or so? Is it true?);—to doubt concerning our condition and

privileges as believers;—to distrust Divine Providence or grace, and hence to entertain hard thoughts of God. *If* is a favourite word with Satan. It is part of his "grand design to tempt the children of God, first, to doubt of their adoption; next, to distrust God's fatherly care over them; and, last of all, to use unwarrantable means to help themselves."

Command that these stones be made bread.—The Tempter adapts his suggestions to the circumstances of those whom he assaults.—He sought to induce our Lord to work a miracle, for his own support and comfort, and in compliance with his own will. Our Lord exercised his miraculous powers only for the good of others, in proof of his mission, and in obedience to his Father's will.

But he answered and said, It is written.—We must confront temptation to sin with plain and pertinent declarations of Holy Scripture. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. vi. 17); and, if we would conquer, we must use it.

The quotation made by our Lord is remarkably appropriate, as you may find by a reference to the text and context, Deut. viii. 3—5. The words cited contain an answer directly in point; and the rest of the passage ("*He suffered thee to hunger;—as a man chasteneth his son*") is full of arguments against Satan's insidious temptation.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; i. e. man's life may be supported, not only by the

use of ordinary food, but by any means which God may be pleased to appoint—by the word or command of God. Let us exercise faith in this promise, if ever we are reduced to the extremity of temporal want. “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom,”—you know the rest. Hab. iii. 17, 18.

Cast thyself down.—Here the Devil sought to induce our Lord to employ his miraculous energies for the purpose of display or vain glory; and attempted to draw him into the sin of presumptuous and unwarranted confidence in a divine promise.

Observe the craft of the tempter. He had failed in endeavouring to lead Jesus into distrust; he now seeks to make him fall by means of the opposite temper.

Cast thyself down.—The Devil persuades and entices men to evil; but he cannot compel them to perform it. He cannot hurt us without our own consent. James i. 13—15.

For it is written; in Ps. xci. 11, 12.—Here is Satan quoting Scripture! He can do so now; and we must be on our guard against the abuse of the sacred volume in support of sin and error. The words “in all thy ways” are here omitted; and the promise is misapplied, inasmuch as it belongs properly to those who are in the way of faith and duty, trusting in God to deliver them, not from dangers into which they run, but from those into which they have been brought. Let us walk in God’s ways, and then cast ourselves upon God’s care.

It is written again.—Scripture is to

be interpreted by Scripture; one passage to be weighed against another, and to be expounded by it. And we must confute the abuse or misapplication of Scripture, by the word of God rightly applied.

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.—Having proofs sufficient of the divine presence and protection, in accordance with that promise, we must not seek for more,—as the Israelites did at Massah.

Let us imitate our Saviour’s beautiful example, by renouncing our own will in dutiful subjection to the will of God.

All these things will I give thee.—A false promise, which he was unable to fulfil!—Perhaps this last temptation was the strongest of all. How dangerous are worldly honours when employed as means of temptation!—The temptations of Satan are often plausible. But “the more ingenious he is to take advantage against us, the more industrious we must be to give him none.” “From the crafts and assaults of the Devil, good Lord, deliver us.”

We must not consent to take even that which has been promised to us, in a sinful way. Our Lord would not receive the Messiah’s kingdom at the Devil’s hand.

Him only shalt thou serve.—The one, true, and eternal God, the Maker of heaven and earth, is the only proper object of worship and adoration. Let us worship him, in spirit and in truth, as he has mercifully revealed himself to us in the Gospel of his Son.

The Devil leaveth him.—“Resist

the devil, and he will flee from you."

Angels came.—Yes; God *did give* his angels charge concerning him. Their aid was patiently waited for, and then faithfully supplied.

Adam fell in Paradise and turned it into a wilderness; Christ conquered in a wilderness, and turned it into paradise.

And ministered unto him,—brought him a supply of food, and gave him their services. Ps. xxxvii. 3. Thus also a timely and suitable supply of divine strength and consolation may be to ourselves the consequence of a persevering and successful struggle against temptation.

Let us trust in the Captain of our salvation, and may we conquer in his strength!

HYMN.

I hate the Tempter and his charms,
I hate his flatt'ring breath;
The serpent takes a thousand forms
To cheat our souls to death.

He feeds our hopes with airy dreams,
Or kills with slavish fear;
And holds us still in wide extremes,
Presumption or despair.

Now he persuades "How easy 'tis
To walk the road to heaven."
Anon he swells our sins, and cries,
"They cannot be forgiven."

Thus he supports his cruel throne
By mischief and deceit,
And drags the sons of Adam down
To darkness and the pit.

Ye sons of God! oppose his rage;
Resist, and he'll be gone;
Thus did our holy Lord engage
And vanquish him alone.

WATTS.

§ XIII.

CHAP. IV. 12—25.

Christ dwelleth in Capernaum: beginneth to preach; calleth Peter and Andrew, James and John, and healeth all the diseased.

12 ¶ ' Now when Jesus had heard that John was ¶ cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 *The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16 'The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17 ¶ "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 ¶ ° And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon ^p called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them,

Follow me, and 'I will make you fishers of men.

20 'And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

21 'And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, 'teaching in their synagogues, and preaching "the gospel of the kingdom, "and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 'And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

† Mark i. 14. Luke iii. 20, & iv. 14, 31. John iv. 43.
 ‡ Or, *delivered up*. A. D. 31.—*Is.* ix. 1, 2.—*Is.* xlii. 7.
 Luke ii. 52.—*Mark* i. 14, 15. *sc* ch. iii. 2. & x. 7.
 —*Mark* i. 16, 17, 18. Luke v. 2. *p* John i. 42.—
q Luke v. 10, 11.—*Mark* x. 28. Luke xviii. 28.—*Mark*
 i. 19, 20. Luke v. 10.—*sc* ch. 9. 35. Mark i. 21, 30.
 Luke iv. 15, 44. *sc* ch. xxiv. 14. Mark i. 14. *sc* Mark i.
 34.—*p* Mark iii. 7.

Reader. Our Lord went into Galilee, where John had lately been preaching, in order perhaps, to carry forward the good work which had been interrupted by the Baptist's imprisonment, and also because that remote part of the country afforded greater facility for his own ministry than Judea, which was the chief seat of the Scribes and Pharisees. We ought to avoid persecution, whenever we can do so consistently with duty.

Theophilus. It is said that Capernaum was upon the sea-coast; but it is not marked as a maritime town in the maps.

Reader. "Upon the sea-coast" means here "on the borders of the lake of Gennesaret," otherwise called the sea of Galilee or of Tiberias. This lake was about fifteen miles long, and from six to nine wide. It is often mentioned in the New Testament.

Upper Galilee is here called Galilee of the Gentiles, because it bordered on heathen countries, and because a great number of Phenicians, Egyptians, and other foreigners had settled there.

Theophilus. How do the expressions "by the way of the sea" and "beyond Jordan" agree together?

Reader. "By the way of the sea," i.e. to the west of the lake of Gennesaret, towards the Mediterranean; "beyond Jordan," i.e. to the east of that river and the lake; so that the expressions, taken together, denote the whole neighbourhood of the lake, east and west. Others read "along the banks of Jordan" instead of "beyond Jordan."

The prophecy here quoted is from the ninth chapter of Isaiah. In its primary sense, it related to deliverance from the army of Sennacherib. St. Matthew points out its farther application to the spiritual blessings attendant on the presence and preaching of Christ, in which these words received their complete fulfilment.

It is said that our Lord preached in *their synagogues*. I suppose you know what the synagogues were.

Theophilus. Places of worship among the Jews, in which the Law and the Prophets were read and expounded, and prayer was offered up every Sabbath. The services were under the presidency of certain superintendents, who frequently invited different members of the congregation, especially strangers, to expound the Scriptures, and to address the people on religious subjects.

Reader. Mention is made in verse 24 of "persons possessed with devils" or demons.—Read a passage to which I point, describing the case of these unhappy persons, to whom frequent allusion is made in the New Testament.

Theophilus. They were "persons under the influence of evil spirits, who had complete possession of their faculties, and produced many symptoms of disease not unlike melancholy, madness, and epilepsy. Christ and the Apostles spoke to them and of them, as such; they addressed them, and managed them precisely as if they were so possessed, leaving their hearers to infer beyond a doubt that such was their real opinion. The

L

evil spirits spoke, conversed, asked questions, gave answers, and expressed their knowledge of Christ, and their fear of him; Mat. viii. 28; Luke viii. 27. They are represented as going out of the bodies of the persons possessed, and entering the bodies of others; Mat. viii. 32. Jesus threatened them, commanded them to be silent, to depart, and not to return; Mark i. 25; v. 8; ix. 25. This could not be said of diseases. Nor is there any absurdity in the opinion that those persons were really under the influence of demons. It is no more absurd to suppose that an angel, or many angels, should have fallen and become wicked, than that so many men should. It afforded an opportunity for Christ to show his power over the enemies of himself and of man, and thus to evince himself qualified to meet every enemy of the race, and triumphantly to redeem his people." He came to destroy the power of Satan; Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. xvi. 20.

READER. We may learn much from successive portions of this passage.

Leaving Nazareth,—from which place our Lord was, in fact, rudely thrust out. Luke iv. 29.—God justly withdraws the means of grace from those who continue to slight and reject them; although, in his mercy, he often pleads long with such miserable offenders. Christ left Nazareth, even the town in which he had been brought up. Let us give him a welcome in our hearts, and he will

73

never leave us nor forsake us.—O God, make clean our hearts within us, and take not thy Holy Spirit from us!

He came and dwelt in Capernaum; i.e. he made that town his principal place of resort. If some men refuse to entertain Christ and his Gospel, others will receive himself and his blessings with open and thankful hearts.

The people which sat in darkness.—Sad and dangerous was the temporal condition of that people, before God sent them the deliverance of which Isaiah speaks. Still worse was their spiritual condition when our Lord began his ministry among them. All men, by nature, are in darkness; nay, they are sitting in darkness, like the Egyptians of old, of whom it is said that none moved from his place by reason of the plague which wrapped them in impenetrable gloom. To be without the knowledge of God, to be deprived of his favour, and to be destitute of any means of obtaining either the one or the other, is indeed to be enveloped in thick darkness, which may be felt. Such is the benighted and woful condition of every man by nature, in this fallen and apostate world.—But, it is added, that they

Saw great light,—and to them—light is sprung up.—Such is the character of the Gospel. Christ is “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.” “The entrance of thy word,” says the Psalmist, “giveth light”—instruction to the ignorant, comfort and joy to the wretched; — “quickenings and

enlivening, reviving and cheering the souls of those who entertain it, how great soever their outward darkness and distress may be.”

Well may the language of this verse be applied to ourselves, as the inhabitants of a country once heathen, ignorant, and barbarous! How grievous is the case of those among us, and how great will be their condemnation, who sit in darkness even while the light of the Gospel is shining clearly around them! Let not such misery and guilt be our own. We have the light, and well may we rejoice in the light which we possess; but let us remember that it is also our solemn duty to walk as children of light! (See John i. 5; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4).

Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Repentance is a demand made by Christ, as well as by his forerunner. And our Lord not only gives a call to repentance, but also bestows power to repent and turn to God. Acts v. 31.

He saith unto them, Follow me.—These were poor, illiterate fishermen, whom Christ called to be his disciples and preachers of the Gospel; — thus choosing “the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” See 1 Cor. i. 26—29. Hence the divine power by which the Gospel was established in the world was rendered the more remarkable.

But this is no warrant for the employment of men ignorant of Scripture, and of things necessary for the right understanding of Scripture, as preachers of the Gospel in our day.

ST. MATTHEW IV. 12—25.

Matthew Henry says very truly, "This will not justify the bold intrusion of ignorant and unqualified men into the work of the ministry; extraordinary gifts of knowledge and utterance are not now to be expected, but requisite abilities must be obtained in an ordinary way; and without a competent measure of these, none are to be admitted to that service."

Follow me.—These disciples had already become acquainted with Jesus; but now they are called to devote themselves entirely to give attendance on his sacred person, and to perform the work which he should assign to them.—"Even those who have been called to follow Christ have need to be called to follow on, and to follow nearer; especially when they are designed for the work of the ministry." They must follow him in the way of faith, and in the exercise of patience, humility, self-denial, and all other graces of the Spirit.

I will make you fishers of men.—"It is Christ that qualifies men for this work, calls them to it, authorises them in it, and gives them success in it." The call and teaching of the Spirit within the heart, as well as an outward call and designation by the church, are needful to make a good and faithful minister of Christ.

Fishers of men.—How beautifully characteristic are these words of the real nature and effect of the ministerial office! See 2 Cor. xii. 14—19.

"We must be Christ's disciples," says a pious commentator, "before we are his ministers; his fol-

lowers before we are his ambassadors. We must learn Christ before we preach him; otherwise we may fish for a livelihood, for honour and applause, but not for souls; if we be not first enclosed ourselves in the net of the Gospel, we can have but small hopes of bringing in others." But when Christ's ministers faithfully preach the Gospel, in sincerity, humility, and love, they have many encouraging reasons to hope that their labour "will not be in vain in the Lord." Still, however, the blessing and success must be derived from Christ himself. "Our labour," says Bishop Hall, "is only in the cast, Christ's power wholly in the draught. Some fish cleave to the rocks, others play upon the sands, and more wallow in the mud; and we shall labour all our days and catch nothing, if Christ doth not bring our fish to the net, and enclose them in it, as well as assist us in the throwing of it."

Let us pray that it may please God to give his grace and benediction to Christian ministers, that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth his glory, and set forward the salvation of all men.

They left their nets—left their ship and their father, and followed him.—Observe here the power of the Lord Jesus, and the efficacy of his word.—Consider the obedience of his disciples, as an act of faith, resembling that of their father Abraham; Heb. xi. 8.—And remember also, that "those who would follow Christ aright, must leave all to follow him. Every Christian must leave all in

affection, must sit loose to all, must 'hate father and mother' (Luke xiv. 26), i.e. must love them less than Christ, must be ready to part with his interest in them rather than with his interest in Jesus Christ. But those who are devoted to the work of the ministry are, in a special manner, concerned to disentangle themselves from all the affairs of this life, that they may give themselves wholly to that work which requires the whole man." "Nothing but an indispensable necessity in providing for a family can excuse a minister's entangling himself with worldly business."

A church ought not to encourage a worldly spirit in its ministers, either by holding out offers of wealth and honour *to those who seek such things*; or by withholding necessary support from those who really *seek men's souls*.—It is awful to see some ministers seeking the patronage of the great, suing for appointments, and hunting for preferment, instead of acting as fishers of men; and it is sad to see others compelled, by dire necessity, to neglect, more or less, their proper and favourite employment, in order to earn a livelihood!

They brought unto him all sick people—and he healed them.—The multitude of persons cured, and the great variety of complaints from which they were relieved, are among many other striking attestations to the reality and extent of our Lord's miraculous power; and to the divinity of him who wrought such wonders, by his own authority, and as an act of his own omnipotence.

Meditate upon the last two verses of this chapter, as containing, at once, proofs of divine power—instances of divine mercy and compassion—patterns and spiritual motives to our own benevolent care of the sick and the afflicted,—in the benefits conferred upon men by the Redeemer and Saviour of their souls.

HYMN.

Thou whose almighty word
Chaos and darkness heard,
And took their flight;
Hear us, we humbly pray,
And, where the Gospel's day
Sheds not its glorious ray,
Let there be light.

Thou who didst come to bring
On thy protecting wing
Healing and light,
Sight to the inly blind,
Health to the sick in mind;
Oh, now to all mankind
Let there be light.

Spirit of truth and love,
Life-giving, holy dove,
Speed forth thy flight;
Move o'er the waters' face,
Bearing the lamp of grace,
And in earth's darkest place,
Let there be light.

O holy and blessed
And glorious Trinity,
Grace, love, and might,
Boundless as ocean's tide,
Rolling in fullest pride
O'er the world, far and wide,
Let there be light!

MARRIOTT.

§ XIV.

CHAP. V. 1—12.

*Christ beginneth his sermon in the mount :
declaring who are blessed.*

AND seeing the multitudes, "he

ST. MATTHEW V. 1—12.

went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him :

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 *Blessed are* the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

4 *Blessed are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 *Blessed are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 *Blessed are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 *Blessed are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 *Blessed are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 *Blessed are* the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 *Blessed are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

11 *Blessed are* ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 *Rejoice,* and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

^a Mark iii. 13, 20.—^b Luke vi. 20. See Psa. li. 17. Prov. xvi. 19, & xxix. 23. Is. lvii. 15, & lxvi. 2.—^c Is. lxi. 2, 3. Luke vi. 21. John xvi. 20. 2 Cor. i. 7. Rev. xxi. 4.—^d Ps. xxxvii. 11.—^e See Rom. iv. 13.—/ Is. lv. 1, & lxx. 13.—^f Ps. xli. 1; ch. vi. 14. Mark xi. 25. 2 Tim. i. 16. Heb. vi. 10. Jam. ii. 13.—^g Ps. xv. 2, & xxiv. 4. Heb. xii. 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 John iii. 2, 3.—^h 2 Cor. iv. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 14.—/ Luke vi. 22. ^m 1 Pet. iv. 14. † Gr. *lying*.—ⁿ Luke vi. 23. Acts v. 41. Rom. v. 8. Jam. i. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 13. ^o Neh. ix. 26. 2 Chr. xxxvi. 16; ch. xxiii. 34, 37. Acts vii. 52. 1 Thes. ii. 15.

Reader. We have now arrived at a very important portion of the sacred record,—our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount;—a discourse delivered by the great Prophet of the church, concerning whom it was said by the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him;"—a discourse addressed not to any particular class of his disciples, but (as is plain from ch. vii. 28, 29) to all the multitudes who followed him, and, through them, to all men who should come within reach of his instructions. May our understandings and our hearts be opened to receive instruction dropping like dew from those sacred lips into which grace was poured without measure! May we hereby become more wise unto salvation; and be enabled to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

In reading this heavenly discourse, I propose to adopt a method somewhat different from that which we have hitherto pursued. We find here little room for critical inquiry, or verbal explanation; so that few difficulties are likely to arise in the way of interpretation; and I hope to be able to anticipate any questions of this nature which may arise in your minds, without our usual method of expository discussion. I shall thus have a better opportunity of fixing

ST. MATTHEW V. 1—12.

your undivided attention on those practical truths which are so remarkably prominent throughout these chapters.

READER.—Our Saviour begins his discourse by expounding to us the principles of happiness; mercifully declaring to us in what dispositions and habits our real blessedness, for time and for eternity, consists.

Blessed are the poor in spirit.—True happiness must be built upon the foundation of unfeigned humility and lowliness of mind. The poor in spirit are those who have a real, deep, and practical sense of their own innate corruption, the guilt of their actual transgressions, and their state of helplessness and spiritual destitution; and who are hence led to renounce all confidence in self.—Now it is true that this state of mind and feeling, if alone, does not make a man happy; but that, if it terminate in itself, is, to say the least, imperfect. Why, then, are the poor in spirit happy? Our Saviour answers,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—These humble men are prepared to receive the Gospel of the grace of God,—to submit to divine teaching,—to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit,—to become members even now of that kingdom of God which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and hereafter to awake up and behold the face of God in righteousness, and to dwell with Him for ever. And the Most High graciously vouchsafes to bestow upon

them all these blessings; to give them the privileges of his people here, and to receive them to his glory in the world to come. Isa. lvii. 15.

Blessed are they that mourn.—Not they who are oppressed with that sorrow of the world which worketh death;—not merely those who are bent under the weight of some heavy affliction, unless their grief be made a means of bringing them to God;—but those who “sorrow after a godly sort,”—lamenting the sins and guilt of which they are conscious, mourning over their own sins and the sins of others.

For they shall be comforted.—The Gospel, proclaiming the value of Christ’s blood,—the infinite compassion of God, and the suitableness and efficacy of the scheme of redemption,—shall speak peace to their souls. A balm has been provided for their wound. They will find the promises of pardon, and peace, and eternal life; they will receive that word of consolation, which shall lead them to exclaim, “This is all my salvation and all my desire.” Isa. lxi. 1—3; Mat. xi. 28—30; John xiv. 26, 27; Rev. xxi. 4.

Blessed are the meek.—The meek are they who easily and quietly submit to the will of God and the dispensations of his providence, even when contrary to their natural inclination; and who are gentle, kind, and forbearing in their disposition and conduct towards men. Meekness is a submissive, patient, peaceful, quiet temper; opposed to a proud, impatient, quarrelsome, or revengeful disposition. And the men

ST. MATTHEW V. 1—12.

who possess this temper—who “humble themselves under the mighty hand of God,” and are “gentle towards all men,” are happy;

For they shall inherit the earth;—they shall have the most real enjoyment of the gifts of providence during this present life; and it is their privilege to regard their peace, tranquillity, and sense of the divine favour and blessing here below, as an earnest and foretaste of a better inheritance, “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” (Prov. xxii. 24, 25; xv. 1; xxv. 8—15; 1 Tim. iv. 8; vi. 3—6.)

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness;—that is to say, they who have a deep and ardent desire to be accounted righteous, and to be made holy; to be accepted of God as his children, and to be conformed to his image in their mind and disposition, and enabled to fulfil his will in their life and conduct. The believer in Christ Jesus, sensible of his want of these inestimable blessings, and knowing that they are promised to those who seek for them, is earnest and importunate in his desires and endeavours, with prayer, for the attainment of the good which is thus held out for his acceptance.

For they shall be filled.—These desires, kindled by God’s Spirit, shall be satisfied. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your

labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” (Isa. lv. 1, 2).—“As for me,” says the Psalmist, “I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness,”—yes, finally, fully, everlastingly satisfied and happy. Ps. xvii. 15.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. The merciful are those who, being penetrated with a sense of God’s great and unmerited goodness, compassion, and loving-kindness toward themselves, cherish a temper of pity and compassion, of free, generous love, and active benevolence, towards their brethren.

In showing mercy and doing good, we imitate, at our humble distance, one of the most glorious of God’s moral attributes. “Merciful as God is merciful.” How exalted is this privilege! “They shall obtain mercy.” How great is this reward! God, in his providence, will cause such persons to find favour with men, so far as it may be for their good; and, what is more, He will grant them that—which even the most benevolent man will need—mercy in the day of judgment, according to his promise. If they have given proof of their love to God, the fruit of faith, God will finally fulfil his promises, so freely made to all who shall then be “found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” (Phil. iii. 9).

Blessed are the pure in heart.—Who are the pure in heart? They, whose hearts, having been purified by faith, are honest and sincere, without hypocrisy or guile,—and are free from the love and dominion of sin, that source of pollution which God hates.

For they shall see God;—they shall enjoy the manifestation of his favour and his presence. “Not only shall they see him perfectly hereafter, but, as far as they can receive him, he will impart and make himself known unto them here. (John xiv. 23). Whereas, on the contrary, what makes the word obscure is, the filthy mists within. God will in just judgment hide himself, and the saving truth of his word, from those that entertain sin and delight in it; the very sins in which they delight shall obscure and darken the light of the Gospel to them, so that though it shines clear as the sun at noon day, they shall be as those that live in a dungeon; they shall not discern it.”—Let us dread this awful punishment and loss; may ours be the blessedness of those who shall indeed see God, see him “spiritually and mediately in this life, gloriously and immediately in the life to come!”

Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.—Where there is inward purity of heart, there will be a love of outward peace, unanimity, and concord;—the man who is at peace with God, will study and delight to be at peace with his neighbours, and to promote peace among all men upon earth. God is the author of peace; and the children of this heavenly Father are

known by their likeness to him in this distinguishing feature of his character. Let us “labour for peace;” and let our love of truth be combined with a love of unity and concord. Whose children are we, if we are ready and willing to promote quarrels in a family, to sow divisions in a church, or to fan the flames of discord in the state?

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—In this verse, and the two following, our Lord sets forth the happiness of those who meekly submit to sufferings at the hands of worldly and wicked men, on account of their religion,—on account of their dutiful, conscientious obedience to the known will of God. It is not a blessed thing to affect singularity, or to overstrain religious observances, and so to excite opposition against ourselves; much less is it blessed to make false pretensions to personal piety, or to set up unwarranted claims on behalf of religion or the church; and then to submit to sufferings which we have, in fact, deserved. But it is a sign of grace, and an earnest of future glory, to submit patiently and meekly to unmerited and unprovoked wrongs, arising not from our own misconduct or indiscretion, but simply from the evil dispositions of men's hearts, their hatred of what is good, their patronage of what is false and unholy,—from the power of Satan in the world, or the dominion of error, bigotry, and rancour in the professing Church of Christ. 1 Pet. iii. 13—18; Phil. i. 29.

ST. MATTHEW V. 13—20.

With regard to all these particulars of a holy temper, a truly religious frame of mind and course of conduct, let us not only remember the sayings of the Lord Jesus recorded in this passage for our learning ; but let us also consider how completely they were exemplified in his own most holy life. Let us consider his humility ; how he mourned over the sins of men and suffered for them ; his meekness ; that it was his meat and drink to do the will of the Father ; his merciful and compassionate temper ; his purity of heart ; his peaceable and peace-making disposition ; his meek submission to reproaches, and persecution even unto death.—And, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, may the same mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus our Lord. So shall we hereafter be made partakers of his blessedness and glory.

HYMN.

Bless'd are the humble souls that see
Their emptiness and poverty ;
Treasures of grace to them are given,
And crowns of joy laid up in heaven.

Bless'd are the men of broken heart,
Who mourn for sin with inward smart ;
The blood of Christ divinely flows,
A healing balm for all their woes.

Bless'd are the meek, who stand afar
From rage and passion, noise and war ;
God will secure their happy state,
And plead their cause against the great.

Bless'd are the souls who thirst for grace,
Hunger and long for righteousness ;
They shall be well supplied and fed
With living streams and living bread.

Bless'd who, instructed from above,
Are fill'd with sympathy and love ;
From Christ the Lord they shall obtain
Like sympathy and love again.

M

Bless'd are the pure, whose hearts are clean
From the defiling power of sin ;
With endless pleasure they shall see
A God of spotless purity.

Bless'd are the men of peaceful life,
Who quench the coals of glowing strife ;
They shall be call'd the heirs of bliss,
The sons of God—the God of peace.

Bless'd are the sufferers, who partake
Of pain and shame for Jesu's sake ;
Their souls shall triumph in the Lord,
Glory and joy are their reward.

WATTS.

§ XV.

CHAP. V. 13—20.

Who are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the city on an hill, the candle. That Christ came to fulfil the Law.

13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth : 'but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men 'light a candle, and put it under || a bushel, but on a candlestick ; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, 'that they may see your good works, and 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 ¶ "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

p Mark ix. 50. Luke xiv. 34, 35.—q Prov. iv. 18. Phil. ii. 15.—r Mark iv. 21. Luke viii. 16, & xi. 33. † The word in the original signifieth a measure consisting about a pint less than a peck.—s 1 Pet. ii. 12. † John xv. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 25.—u Rom. iii. 31, & x. 4. Gal. iii. 24.—w Luke xvi. 17.—x Jam. ii. 10.—y Rom. ix. 31, & x. 3.

READER. *Ye are the salt of the earth.*—Real Christians are made blessings to the world. Ministers, by preaching sound doctrine, and all believers, by making confession of the truth and by leading a godly life, are compared to salt, which preserves things from putrefaction and destruction, and renders our food savoury and pleasant. By their prayers,

example, and influence, under the divine blessing, they keep the world from universal corruption and ruin.—May this honour be our own! Well may we be content to be despised or persecuted, if we are enabled to be the instruments of so much good!

If the salt have lost its savour.—It is a sad and disgraceful condition to bear the name of Christians without having the life of Christianity within us, and without adorning the Gospel by our lives and conduct. I admire the following apposite allusion and remark of a commentator on this passage.—Maundrell, speaking of a certain rock in the Valley of Salt, says, "I broke a piece of it, of which that part that was exposed to the rain, sun, and air, *though it had the sparks and particles of salt, yet had perfectly lost its savour*: the inner part, which was connected to the rock, retained its savour, as I found by proof." "A preacher, or a private Christian, who has lost the life of Christ, and the witness of his Spirit, may be likened to this salt. He may have the *sparks and glittering particles* of true wisdom, but *without its unction or comfort*. Only that which is *connected with the rock*, the soul that is in union with Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, can *preserve its savour*, and be instrumental of good to others."

Good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot.—Solemn and awful truth; especially when we consider it as proceeding from the lips of our merciful Redeemer.—It has been well said that "a wicked

man is the worst of creatures; a wicked Christian is the worst of men; and a wicked minister is the worst of Christians."

Ye are the light of the world.—The Lord Jesus Christ is the light of the world, in the highest and full sense of the expression. He is the sun, the glory of the church, from whom all other light is borrowed. But all believers, who are enlightened by this principal luminary, may reflect some portion of his splendour; and being themselves "light in the Lord," may "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." Eph. v. 8; Phil. ii. 15.

Let your light so shine before men. Or, *thus* let your light shine before men.—As a candle gives light to all that are in a room where it is burning, so should your religion be known, by its effects, by all those among whom you dwell, and should contribute to the dissemination of the truth.

A spirit of ostentation and vain glory is alien from the nature of true religion deeply seated in the heart; but, at the same time, it is one characteristic of genuine piety that it manifests itself, and becomes evident, by its fruits. Our love to God and devotion to his service are to be made known not by a loud and forward profession, but by our good works. Even these are not to be performed for the purpose of display, but in obedience to the will of God. And our object—the noble and animating object at which we are continually to aim—is, not our own praise, but the glory of our heavenly Father. "Whatsoever ye do, do all

to the glory of God,"—that is the Christian's rule of life. May we have grace to conform ourselves to this rule, in thought, word, and work! Let the excellence of the Gospel and the power of divine grace appear in our good temper and holy course of life; and we may trust that, by the divine blessing, our example will be made useful to those around us, and the great Giver of all good may be glorified by means of the gifts of his mercy bestowed upon ourselves. How delightful is this thought to the mind of every disciple of the Lord Jesus, who is duly influenced by love towards Him who first loved us!

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.—Our Lord Jesus Christ, by his ministry and work, so far from casting any discredit upon the law of Moses or the sayings of the prophets, did really complete, fill up, and carry out the design of the whole volume of existing revelation. Himself and his Gospel were in substance what the Law was in shadow or outline. As to the moral law, he perfectly fulfilled it in his most holy life;—he endured in his own person the penalty of transgressions which others had committed;—he expounded its meaning and spirituality, and vindicated its obligation, in opposition to the false glosses of human traditions and mistakes;—and he continues to complete it, by his Spirit, in his people, giving them grace and power to obey it from the heart, by loving God above all things and their neighbour as themselves. It is to this latter portion of his office,

—the true exposition of the law, and a provision for its fulfilment by his disciples, not only in the letter but in spirit,—that our Lord more especially refers in the positive assertions now before us. Let us be thankful that we are permitted to see what many righteous men desired in vain to witness, “Christ, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Let us rejoice that in him types and prophecies have been fulfilled; that he has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us; and that he has enforced and beautified the eternal and royal law of love, and has given his people power to obey it.

One jot or one tittle; the smallest vowel or the mere corner or ornament of a consonant,—a proverbial expression denoting the smallest part,—*shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*—As to the mere ritual or ceremonial parts of the Mosaic law, they point to the Gospel, and in its establishment they are finally fulfilled. The moral law, which was from the beginning, must remain in force for ever; not as a covenant, yet as a declaration of the divine will, and a rule of human duty;—“as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other.”

And hence we may understand that heavy woe, pronounced in the nineteenth verse, against all who wilfully and habitually violate the least of God’s commandments!

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.—It must exceed their righteousness in its aim and end, its principles and motives, being honestly directed to the glory of God;—in its extent, bearing respect to *all* commandments and injunctions of the moral law;—and in its spirituality, being not a mere outward demonstration, but an internal quality or disposition of the heart, a determination of the will, a bias of the affections, tending towards God.—Such righteousness, and such alone, is the genuine fruit and proof of faith in Christ.

Ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.—What words can more forcibly express to us the great and unalterable truth that holiness of heart and life—a holiness which is the work of God himself within the soul—is invariably and indispensably necessary to salvation! Not that our good works contribute to save us; but that the will and power to perform them is an integral part of our union with Christ by faith, and an indispensable preparation for our admission into the regions of perfect purity and bliss.

HYMN.

Great Teacher of thy Church, we own
Thy precepts all divinely wise;
Oh may thy mighty power be shown
To fix them still before our eyes.

Deep on our hearts thy law engrave,
And fill our hearts with heav’nly zeal;
That, while we trust thy power to save,
We may that sacred law fulfil.

Adorned with ev’ry heav’nly grace,
May our example brightly shine;
And the sweet lustre of thy face,
Reflected beam from each of thine.

These lineaments divinely fair
Our heav'nly Father shall proclaim;
And men, that view his image there,
Shall join to glorify his name.

OLNEY H.

§ XVI.

CHAP. V. 21—32.

What it is to kill;—to commit adultery.

21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said || by them of old time, *Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That *whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, || 'Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 Therefore 'if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 'Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, 'whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge

deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever 'looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 'And if thy right eye || offend thee, 'pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That *whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall

marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

¶ Or, *to them.* *a* Ex. xx. 13. Deut. v. 17.—*a* 1 John iii. 15. ¶ *That is, vain fellow.* 2 Sam. vi. 20. *b* James ii. 20.—*c* ch. viii. 4, & xxiii. 19.—*d* See Job xlii. 8; ch. xviii. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 7.—*e* Prov. xxv. 8. Luke xii. 58, 59. *f* See Ps. xxxii. 6. Is. lv. 6.—*g* Ex. xx. 14. Deut. v. 18.—*h* Job xxxi. 1. Prov. vi. 25. See Gen. xxxiv. 2. 2 Sam. xi. 2.—*i* ch. xviii. 8, 9. Mark ix. 43, 47. ¶ Or, *do cause thee to offend.* *k* See ch. xix. 12. Rom. viii. 13. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Col. iii. 5.—*l* Deut. xxiv. 1. Jer. lvi. 1. See ch. xix. 3, &c. Mark x. 2, &c.—*m* ch. xix. 9. Luke xvi. 18. Rom. vii. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

READER. *Ye have heard.*—Our Saviour now proceeds to comment upon certain false glosses upon the law, and some perverse maxims and sayings prevalent in his time, tending to weaken or obscure the real meaning of various moral precepts contained in the Old Testament. How prone is the mind of man to mar and corrupt even the true sayings of God! And how plainly does it appear that our blessed Lord did not seek to destroy the law, but only to remove those corruptions by which it had been darkened and dishonoured! Oral tradition is a bad expositor of the written record of God's will and ways; the words of the Lord Jesus, "they are spirit and they are life."

Thou shalt not kill.—The Jews seem to have supposed and taught that this prohibition extends only to the taking away of life; but our Lord shows that the spirit of the law is violated, in the sight of God, by the indulgence of vain, unjust, or rash anger, and by the use of opprobrious and insulting language, occasioned either by natural infirmities or the like (*Raca*), or containing the imputation of moral worthlessness (*Thou fool*).

The Jews had an inferior court of justice, called here the judgment, which was a body of twenty-three magistrates; and a superior court, here named the council, which was the great Sanhedrim, capable of inflicting a higher degree of punishment than the other. Our Lord here alludes to these courts, with a view to teach us that various degrees of enmity and malice will subject men to corresponding condemnation at the hands of God.

"The gehenna of fire" is an image under which our Saviour often spoke of the future punishment of the wicked.—But no language can describe, no thought conceive, the extent of their misery and woe!

If thou bring thy gift to the altar.—To worship God with a heart full of ill-will and enmity against our brethren, is an awful affront to the Majesty of heaven, the author and lover of peace. Such a sacrifice is indeed "an abomination unto the Lord."—We must do our part, all that lies in our power, to live in a state of harmony with our brethren; using our best endeavours to accommodate differences, to allay animosities, and to live in amity and peace. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Rom. xii. 18.

It is a proof that the heart is not right with God, not purified by faith and fit for heaven, when it harbours dispositions of hatred, rancour, or contempt, or cherishes an implacable, unforgiving spirit. This uncharitable temper is ruinous and deadly to the soul. "No gifts, however

costly, no devotions, however specious, will prevail with God to pass it by, while we live; and if we die with hearts full of this rancour and bitterness, we can never expect to be encircled in the arms of Him who is love. There is no reconciliation to God without our hearts' good-will to all men. Nay farther, the text here speaks of a prison, which is the dreadful dungeon of hell, into which the implacable and unreconciled person must be cast, and lie for ever without mixture of pity: and it is not men's scoffing at it that will secure them against the horror of it."

Hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.—Still our Saviour employs his discourse in pointing out the spirituality and extent of the moral law; declaring that it reaches even to the very intents and imaginations of the heart. Wanton thoughts, lascivious looks, and impure desires, are sinful in the sight of God. "The thought of foolishness is sin."—Remember the fall of David. And, if we have been mercifully preserved from so flagrant a transgression of the holy and perfect law of God, still let the prayer of the royal penitent be evermore our own, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.—Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. li. 5—10.

If thy right eye offend thee, i. e. cause thee to stumble or fall, pluck it out and cast it from thee.—We must renounce whatever is most dear to us, or most agreeable to our own in-

clinations or desires, if we cannot retain or pursue these things without transgressing the law of God. It is our duty to avoid whatever may lead to sin or become an occasion of it.—"The right eye and the right hand," says one, "are here used to point out those sins which appear most pleasing and profitable to us.—The right eye may be considered as denoting the darling idol; the right hand, the profitable employment, pursued on sinful principles; these become snares and traps to the soul, by which it falls into the pit of perdition.—We must shut our senses against dangerous objects, to avoid the occasion of sin; and must deprive ourselves of all that is most dear and profitable to us, when we find that these dear and profitable things, however innocent in themselves, cause us to sin against God."

Let him give her a writing of divorcement.—Under the law of Moses, divorce was permitted in certain cases, besides that here mentioned, on account of the hardness of men's hearts. But, as our Saviour elsewhere teaches us, it was not so from the beginning. It was the original law of God, and it is his permanent institution, that the marriage union should be sacred and indissoluble. And what a merciful provision for the real welfare and happiness of mankind is here! How blessed are the love and faithful attachment of husband and wife, living together according to God's holy ordinance, amidst the duties and comforts of a Christian home, until God, in his wisdom, sees fit to part them by the

hand of death! What a source of happiness to individuals, what a means of preserving peace and good order in the community at large! And how highly honoured by having been treated as a figure of the union which subsists between Christ and his Church!

In the portion of Scripture which we have at this time read and considered, we find various precepts affecting the great Christian duty of brotherly kindness and love. We see that the divine command concerning our duty towards man is not satisfied with even the outward expression of civility or respect; but that we must cherish real, heartfelt good-will towards our brethren, if we would be regarded as the children of our heavenly Father. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Let us heartily concur in the prayer of our church, "O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee: grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake."

HYMN.

Our God is love; and all his saints
His image bear below:
The heart with love to God inspir'd
With love to man will glow.

Teach us to love each other, Lord,
As we are loved by Thee:
None who are truly born of God
Can live in enmity.

Heirs of the same immortal bliss,
Our hopes and fears the same,
Let bonds of love our hearts unite,
Let mutual love inflame.

So may the vain contentious world
Our peaceful lives approve,
And wond'ring say, as they of old,—
See how these Christians love.

§ XVII.

CHAP. V. 33—48.

Against swearing. Christ exhorteth to suffer wrong; to love even our enemies, and to labour after perfectness.

33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that "it hath been said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but 'shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, 'Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is 'God's throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is 'the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 'But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, 'That ye resist not evil: 'but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also.

41 And whosoever 'shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and 'from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour, 'and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray 'for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for 'he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more

than others? do not even the publicans so?

48 'Be ye therefore perfect, even 'as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

o ch. xxiii. 16. e Ex. xx. 7. Lev. xix. 12. Num. xxx. 2. Deut. v. 11. p Deut. xxiii. 23.—g ch. xxiii. 16, 18, 22. Jam. v. 12. r Is. lxvi. 1.—s Ps. xlviii. 2, & lxxxvii. 3.—t Col. iv. 6. Jam. v. 12.—u Ex. xxi. 24. Lev. xxiv. 20. Deut. xix. 21.—v Pro. xx. 22, & xxiv. 29. Luke vi. 29. Rom. xii. 17, 19. 1 Cor. vi. 7. 1 Thes. v. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9. g Is. i. 6. Lam. iii. 30.—s ch. xxvii. 32. Mark xv. 21.—s Deut. xv. 8, 10. Luke vi. 30, 35.—b Lev. xix. 18. c Deut. xxiii. 6. Ps. xli. 10.—d Luke vi. 27, 35. Rom. xii. 14, 20. e Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. 1 Pet. ii. 23, & iii. 9.—f Job xxv. 3.—g Luke vi. 22.—h Gen. xvii. 1. Lev. xi. 44, & xli. 2. Luke vi. 36. Col. i. 28, & iv. 12. Jam. i. 4. 1 Pet. x. 15 16. i Eph. v. 1.

READER. Swear not at all.—

Our blessed Saviour here gives a solemn admonition against the practice of swearing, or lightly and irreverently appealing to the name, perfections, or works of God, in common conversation. He does not intend to prohibit the use of solemn oaths, or formal affirmations in the presence of God, and the calling upon him to witness our sincerity, in courts of law, or on great occasions; as appears abundantly from his own practice (Mat. xxvi. 63, 64), and that of St. Paul (Rom. i. 9; ix. 1; Gal. i. 20; Heb. vi. 16).

It may not be necessary for me to describe to you the various refinements and false glosses of the Pharisees to which our Saviour more particularly alludes. Suffice it to say that all profane language which we now understand by common swearing is here positively and for ever forbidden, as inconsistent with the majesty of God, and betraying a want of due fear and reverence on the part of man.—The following remarks of the son of Sirach are good,

and may be read with profit, if we bear in mind the fact that our Saviour forbids not only *much* swearing, but *all* swearing of the kind and character described.—“Accustom not thy mouth to swearing, neither use thyself to the naming of the Holy One. For as a servant that is continually beaten shall not be without a blue mark; so he that swear-eth and nameth God continually shall not be faultless. A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with iniquity, and the plague shall never depart from his house: if he shall offend, his sin shall be upon him: and if he acknowledge not his sin, he maketh a double offence: and if he swear in vain he shall not be innocent, but his house shall be full of calamities. There is a word that is clothed about with death; God grant that it be not found in the heritage of Jacob; for all such things shall be far from the godly, and they shall not wallow in their sins. Use not thy mouth to intemperate swearing, for therein is the word of sin.” Ecclus. xxiii. 9—13.

Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil, or, from the evil one.—Honesty, truth, and fairness in our words and dealings are indispensably requisite towards the Christian character; and a man who evidently lives under the influence of Christian principle is easily believed by every one around him. His word is sufficient. And it seems to indicate a consciousness of insincerity, a conviction that our word is good for nothing, if we think

it necessary to profane the name of God in order to give point to our assertions, or to impress other men with an assurance that we mean what we say. Such language is degrading to any man; and much more is it unworthy of a Christian. It has been well observed that profane swearing “has done no man any good. It is disgusting to the refined; abominable to the good; insulting to those with whom we associate; unprofitable, needless, and injurious in society; and sinful in the sight of God. God will not hold the profane swearer guiltless.”

I say unto you that ye resist not evil.—How plain and positive is our Saviour’s command against the spirit and the practice of revenge! He teaches us that “Christians ought rather to suffer a double wrong than to seek a private revenge. Christianity obliges us to bear many injuries patiently, rather than to revenge one privately.”

Under the Gospel, as well as under the law, the magistrate “bears not the sword in vain;” “he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath;” Rom. xiii. 4. But while offenders are to be publicly punished for the good of society, private revenge is forbidden, and the spirit of malice, enmity, and hatred is to be banished from every Christian breast. Self-defence, indeed, when life is in danger, is not prohibited;—but this is a very different thing from the desire or act of retaliation for petty wrongs, or for injuries *merely as such*. The spirit and meaning of our Saviour’s precept may be easily under-

stood. "The sum of all is, that Christians must not be litigious; small injuries must be submitted to, and no notice taken of them; and if the injury be such as requires us to seek reparation, it must be for a good end, and without thought of revenge. Though we must not invite injuries, yet we must meet them cheerfully in the way of duty, and make the best of them. If any say Flesh and blood cannot pass by such or such an affront, let them remember that Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.—Let us be willing to comply with this command, "remembering," as St. Paul says, "the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—It is a good rule concerning alms, that they should be given "cheerfully, sincerely, discreetly, proportionally, universally, in obedience to God's command, and with an eye to his glory."

I say unto you, Love your enemies.—Here is a plain and peculiar precept of the Gospel. The duty which it enjoins is, doubtless, difficult in itself;—but let us consider the motives which our Saviour urges,—let us consider the love of him who loved us, and gave himself for us while we were yet enemies,—let us live in dependence on his heavenly grace, and keep ever in view the prize of our high calling,—and then we shall find the fulfilment of this heavenly injunction not only possible, but easy and delightful. To be

like God,—how great an honour and a happiness!

Pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.—"When we meet with ill usage we have an opportunity of showing our conformity both to the precept and to the example of Christ by praying for them who thus abuse us. If we cannot otherwise testify our love to them, yet in this way we may do so without ostentation, and it is such a way as we surely dare not dissemble in. We must pray that God will forgive them,—that they may never fare the worse for anything they have done against us,—and that God would make them to be at peace with us."—Let us never forget those words of our suffering Redeemer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.—"There is nothing greater than to imitate God in doing good to our enemies. All the creatures of God pronounce a sentence of condemnation on the revengeful: and this sentence is written by the rays of the sun, and with the drops of rain, and indeed by all the natural good things, the use of which God freely gives to his enemies."

If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?—"He who loves only his friends, does nothing for God's sake. He who loves for the sake of interest or pleasure, pays himself. God has no enemy which he hates, but sin. We should have no other."

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.—Let your obedience extend not merely to one portion of your duty, but to the whole, in its various parts. In particular, let your good-will and charity be felt and manifested, not only towards a few more immediate favourites, but towards all men with whom you have anything to do, or as far as you are able to benefit them.

Be perfect. What are we to understand by this, in the full Christian sense of the expression? “What is the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, ‘My son, give me thy heart.’ It is the loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind. This is the sum of Christian perfection; it is all comprised in that one word Love. The first branch of it is the love of God; and as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us.” —“Lord, have mercy upon us; and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee.”

PSALM XV.

Who, great God, with favour blest,
Shall within thy temple rest?
Who, protected by thy love,
Dwell on Zion's mount above?

He who, with a heart sincere,
Walks directed by thy fear;
Rules of righteousness divine
Daily in his practice shine.

92

Ne'er from truth his lips depart,
Sacred held within his heart;
Slanders ne'er his tongue employ,
Nor another's fame destroy;

He will not his neighbour wrong
By his actions or his tongue;
He whose ways are truth and love,
From thy favour shall not move.

He, great God, a welcome guest,
On thy holy hill shall rest.
Jesu's glories here we see,—
Teach us, Lord, to copy thee!

GOODE.

§ XVIII.

CHAP. VI. 1—8.

Of Almsgiving, and Prayer.

TAKE heed that ye do not your || alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward || of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore “when thou doest *thine* alms, || do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That *thine* alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself ‘shall reward thee openly.

5 ¶ And when thou prayest,

ST. MATTHEW VI. 1—8.

thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

1 Or, righteousness. Deut. xxiv. 15. Ps. cxli. 9. Dan. iv. 27. 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Or, with.—2 Rom. xii. 8. 1 Or, come not a trumpet to be sounded.—3 Luke xiv. 15.—4 1 Kin. iv. 33.—5 Eccles. v. 2. Eccles. vii. 14. 6 1 Kin. xviii. 26, 29.

READER. *Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*—Hypocrites, that is to say, persons who pretend to religious feelings or intentions which they do not really possess, for the sake of attracting the observation, or gaining the applause, of men, may succeed in obtaining that phantom reputation which they covet,—but let them expect nothing more. They have sought the honour which cometh from man; and let them be content if they obtain it.

The approbation of God they have not honestly desired and sought. Their hypocrisy is an abomination in his sight. They must prepare to be cast out from his presence with fearful and overwhelming displeasure.

When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;—a proverbial expression, meaning, do it as secretly as possible, and so explained by our Saviour in the words following,—*that thine alms may be in secret*,—and more fully by the foregoing sentence, *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them.*—

“The thing which is here forbidden, is not barely the doing good in the sight of men; this circumstance alone, that others see what we do, makes the action neither worse nor better; but the doing it before men *to be seen of them*,—with this view, from this intention only. I say, from this intention only; for this may, in some cases, be a part of our intention: we may design that some of our actions should be seen, and yet they may be acceptable to God. We may intend that our light should shine before men, when our conscience bears us witness, in the Holy Ghost, that our ultimate end in designing that they should see our good works is “that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven.” But take heed that ye do not the least thing with a view to your own glory. Take heed that a regard to the praise of men have no place at all in your works of mercy. If you seek your own glory, if you have any

ST. MATTHEW VI. 1—8.

design to gain the honour that cometh of men, whatever is done with this view is nothing worth; it is not done unto the Lord: he accepteth it not.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are.—Most offensive in the sight of heaven is ostentatious prayer, or ostentatious piety of any kind whatever.—The hypocritical Jews made long prayers, in order to obtain the reputation of eminent sanctity. Sometimes, perhaps, they had in view not merely praise, but profit. They hoped to be not only commended, but trusted, on account of their apparent godliness; and so to find opportunity of making gain. How many are the perverse and corrupt motives which may lead men to perform the outward acts of religion! Let us remember that “purity of intention is destroyed by a view to any temporal reward whatever. If we repeat our prayers, if we attend the public worship of God, if we relieve the poor, with a view to gain or interest, it is not a whit more acceptable to God, than if it were done with a view to praise. Any temporal view or motive, any design but that of promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of men for God’s sake, makes every action, however fair it may appear to men, an abomination unto the Lord.”

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door pray to thy Father which is in secret.—“There is a time when thou art openly to glorify God, to pray to and praise him in

the great congregation. But when thou desirest more largely and more particularly to make thy requests known unto God, whether it be in the evening, or in the morning, or at noon-day, ‘enter into thy closet and shut thy door.’ Use all the privacy thou canst; only leave it not undone, whether thou hast any closet, any privacy, or not. Pray to God, if possible, when none seeth but He; but, if otherwise, pray to God. Thus ‘pray to thy Father which is in secret;’ pour out all thy heart before him; ‘and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.’”

When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do.—“Do not use abundance of words without meaning; think not that the fruit of your prayers depends on the length of them.

The thing here reprovèd is not simply the length, any more than the shortness, of our prayers; but, first, *length without meaning*; the speaking much, and meaning little or nothing; the using (not all repetitions, for our Lord himself prayed thrice, repeating the same words, but) vain repetitions, as the heathen did, reciting the names of their gods over and over: secondly, *the thinking to be heard for our much speaking*; the fancying that God measures prayers by their length, and is best pleased with those which contain the most words.”

And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.—How solemn, and yet, to a pious man, how delightful is the thought that

ST. MATTHEW VI. 9—15.

God is acquainted with our inmost desires and most private thoughts! "Thou God seest me." "O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me; thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts long before. Thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways;" Pt. cxxxix. 1, 2.—And how encouraging the assurance that the supplications of the faithful, offered even in retirement and in solitude, find a ready access to the throne and the ears of our heavenly Father and friend! "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; yea, all such as call upon him faithfully. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will help them;" Psalm cxlv. 18, 19.

HYMN I.

(ALMS).

FATHER of mercies, send thy grace,
All powerful from above,
To form in our obedient souls
The image of thy love.

Oh, may our sympathising heart
That generous pleasure know;
Freely to share in others' joy,
And weep for others' woe.

Whene'er the helpless sons of grief
In low distress are laid,
Soft be our hearts their pains to feel,
And swift our hands to aid.

So Jesus look'd on dying men,
Enthron'd above the skies;
And, when he saw their lost estate,
Felt his compassion rise.

Since Christ, to save our guilty souls,
On wings of mercy flew,
We, whom the Saviour thus hath loved,
Should love each other too.

DEBRIER,

HYMN II.

(PRAYER.)

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Utter'd or unexpress'd;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways;
While angels in their song rejoice,
And cry, "Behold he prays."

The saints in prayer appear as one
In word, and deed, and mind;
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.

Nor prayer is made on earth alone:
The Holy Spirit pleads;
And Jesus on the eternal throne
For sinners intercedes.

O Thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!

MONTGOMERY.

§ XIX.

CHAP. VI. 9—15.

Christ teacheth to pray.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: 'Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. °Thy will be done in earth, °as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our 'daily bread.

12 And °forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 'And lead us not into temptation, but °deliver us from evil : °For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 °For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you :

15 But °if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

° Luke xl. 2, &c.—° ch. xxvi. 39, 42. Acts xxi. 14. A Ps. ciii. 20, 21.—° See Job xxiii. 12. Prov. xxx. 8.—° ch. xviii. 21, &c.—° ch. xxvi. 41. Luke xxii. 40, 46. 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. iii. 10. ° John xvii. 15. ° 1 Chr. xxix. 11.—° Eccles. xxviii. 1, &c. Mark xi. 25, 26. Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13.—° ch. xviii. 35. Jam. ii. 13.

READER. Our Saviour, having given us some general rules concerning prayer, now prescribes a form and model of devotion, for the use of his people in all ages. How precious this portion of his great legacy to the church! The more faithfully and fervently we use this form of supplication, the more we shall understand its value. And let us remember that the fulfilment of the petitions it contains is the sum and substance of all our happiness on earth and in heaven.

"This prayer," says Bishop Porteus, "stands unrivalled in every

circumstance that constitutes the perfection of prayer, and the excellence of that species of composition. It is concise, it is perspicuous, it is solemn, it is comprehensive, it is adapted to all ranks, conditions, and classes of men; it fixes our thoughts on a few great important points, and impresses on our minds a deep sense of the goodness and the greatness of that Almighty Being to whom it is addressed.

"It begins with acknowledging Him to be our most gracious and merciful Father; it begs that his name may everywhere be revered, that his religion may spread over the earth, and that his will may be obeyed by men with the same ardour and alacrity and constancy that it is by the angels in heaven. It next entreats the supply of all our essential wants, both temporal and spiritual; a sufficiency of those things that are absolutely necessary for our subsistence; the forgiveness of our transgressions, on condition that we forgive our brethren; and, finally, support under the temptations that assault our virtue, and deliverance from the various evils and calamities that everywhere surround us; expressing at the same time the utmost trust and confidence in the power of God, to grant whatever he sees it expedient and proper for his creatures to receive.

"The full meaning, then, of this admirable prayer, and of the several petitions contained in it, may perhaps be not improperly expressed in the following manner:—

"O thou great Parent of the Universe, our Creator, our Preserver

ST. MATTHEW VI. 9—15.

and continual Benefactor, grant that we and all reasonable creatures may entertain just and worthy notions of thy nature and attributes, may fear thy power, admire thy wisdom, adore thy goodness, rely upon thy truth; may reverence thy holy name, may bless and praise thee, may worship and obey thee.

“Grant that all the nations of the earth may come to the knowledge and belief of thy holy religion: that it may everywhere produce the blessed fruits of piety, righteousness, charity, and sobriety; that by a constant endeavour to obey thy holy laws, we may approach, as near as the infirmity of our nature will allow, to the more perfect obedience of the angels that are in heaven; and thus qualify ourselves for entering into thy kingdom of glory hereafter.

“Feed us, we beseech thee, with food convenient for us. We ask not for riches and honours; give us only what is necessary for our comfortable subsistence in the several stations which thy providence has allotted to us; and, above all, give us contented minds.

“We are all, O Lord, the very best of us, miserable sinners. Be not extreme, we beseech thee, to mark what we have done amiss, but pity our infirmities, and pardon our offences. Yet let us not dare to implore forgiveness from thee, unless we also from our hearts forgive our offending brethren.

“We are surrounded, on every side, with temptations to sin; and such is the corruption and frailty of our nature, that without thy powerful suc-

our we cannot always stand upright. Take us then, O gracious God, under thy almighty protection; and amidst all the danger and difficulties of our Christian warfare, be thou our refuge and support. Suffer us not to be tempted above what we are able to bear; but send thy Holy Spirit to strengthen our weak endeavours, and enable us to escape or to subdue all the enemies of our salvation.

“Preserve us also, if it be thy blessed will, not only from spiritual, but from temporal evil. Keep us ever by thy watchful providence, both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that thou being in all cases our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal as finally to lose not the things eternal.

“Hear us, O Lord our Governor, from heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, have regard to our petitions. These are offered up to thee in the fullest confidence that thy goodness will dispose, and thy power enable thee to grant whatsoever thy wisdom sees to be convenient for us, and conducive to our final happiness.”

HYMN.

Our heavenly Father, hear
The prayer we offer now;
Thy name be hallow'd far and near—
To thee all nations bow.

Thy kingdom come, thy will
On earth be done in love;
As saints and seraphim fulfil
Thy perfect law above.

Our daily bread supply
While by thy word we live;
The guilt of our iniquity
Forgive, as we forgive.

From dark temptation's power,
From Satan's wiles defend;
Deliver in the evil hour,
And guide us to the end.

Thine then for ever be
Glory and power divine;
The sceptre, throne, and majesty
Of heaven and earth are thine.

MONTGOMERY.

§ XX.

CHAP. VI. 16—18.

Of Fasting.

16 ¶ Moreover 'when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, 'anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

g Is. lviii. 5.—Ruth iii. 3. Dan. x. 3.

READER. Our blessed Lord here gives some needful instruction respecting the use of fasting, or abstinence, as a religious exercise.

When the mind is greatly oppressed or occupied with any subject, especially one of a painful nature, our appetite for food is diminished, or altogether lost. Hence a voluntary abstinence from food becomes a natural expression or token of sorrow; and it has been sanctioned as a religious exercise, denoting grief, contrition, or shame on account of sin. The expression of our Saviour, in this place, *when ye fast*, clearly implies, that believers are permitted to express their sorrow for sin before God by fasting, whenever their feelings, or sense of duty, may prompt them to this exercise.

“Religious fasting,” says Burkitt, “is a devoting of the whole man, soul and body, to a solemn and extraordinary attendance upon God, in a particular time, set apart for that purpose, in order to the deprecating of his displeasure, and for the supplicating of his favour, accompanied with an abstinence from food and sensual delights, and from all secular affairs and worldly business.”

When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance.—Our Saviour directs his discourse against one particular abuse of this religious exercise; namely, a spirit of ostentatious and affected piety. And he instructs us that our fasting must be sincere, and unto the Lord, in order to its being in any measure successful and useful. Let us receive this heavenly lesson with all humility and spiritual obedience. Whenever we fast, or exercise any acts of religious abstinence or humiliation, “let our intention herein be this,

ST. MATTHEW VI. 16—18.

and this alone, to glorify our Father who is in heaven; to express our sorrow and shame for our manifold transgressions of his holy law; to wait for an increase of purifying grace, drawing our affections to things above; to add seriousness and earnestness to our prayers," in which we deprecate "the wrath of God," and sue for the fulfilment of "the great and precious promises which he hath made to us in Christ Jesus."

"Let us beware of mocking God, and of turning our fast as well as our prayers into an abomination unto the Lord, by the mixing of any temporal view—particularly by seeking the praise of men."

Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face.—"Do as thou art accustomed to do at other times." *That thou appear not unto men to fast;* "let this be no part of thy intention: if men know it without any design of thine, it matters not; thou art neither the better nor the worse;" *but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* "Not that we are to imagine that the performing the bare outward act will receive any blessing from God. And if we desire the reward of which our Saviour speaks, let us beware of fancying that we *merit* anything of God by our fasting. We cannot be too often warned of this, inasmuch as a desire to establish our own righteousness, to procure salvation of debt, and not of grace, is so deeply rooted in all our hearts." In our acts of religious humiliation, let us

God's unmerited mercy, to be freely bestowed on us for Christ's sake, and not for anything we can do. The case of the hypocrites, to whom our Lord refers, affords a proof of the lamentable fact, that many men who are able to overcome the allurements of sensual pleasure are yet held captive under the no less fatal influence of spiritual pride. In the history of the early apostasy of the Christian church, we find that acts of bodily austerity and mortification were very soon erected into grounds of false dependence; and the mistakes of some of the ancient doctors on this point became greatly instrumental in destroying the simplicity of the Christian faith. We must keep close to Scripture in all things affecting either our faith or practice. If we give heed to human speculations or fables, we shall certainly be misled. The errors of the Christian "Fathers" concerning almsdeeds, and fasting, exactly resemble those of the Jewish "Rabbies" on the same subject.

May we not only apprehend the meaning, but imbibe the spirit, of our Saviour's injunction! "Let every season, either of public or private fasting, be a season of exercising all those holy affections which are implied in a broken and contrite heart. Let it be a season of devout mourning, of godly sorrow for sin; such a sorrow as that of the Corinthians, concerning which the Apostle saith, that "it worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." (See 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11). "Let our sorrowing after a godly sort work in

ST. MATTHEW VI. 19—23.

us the same inward and outward *repentance*; the same entire change of heart, renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; and the same change of life, till we are holy, as he is holy, in all manner of conversation. Let it work in us the same *carefulness* to be found in him, without spot and blameless; the same *clearing of ourselves*, by our lives rather than our words, by abstaining from all appearance of evil; the same *indignation*, vehement abhorrence of every sin; the same *fear* of our own deceitful hearts; the same *desire* to be in all things conformed to the holy and acceptable will of God; the same *zeal* for whatever may be a means of advancing his glory, and of our growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the same *revenge* against Satan and all his works, against all filthiness both of flesh and spirit."

HYMN.

O Lord! turn not thy face away
From them who prostrate lie,
Lamenting o'er their sinful lives,
With tears and bitter cry.

Thy mercy-gates are open wide
To all who mourn their sin;
Oh, shut them not against us, Lord,
But let us enter in.

Thou know'st, O Lord, what things be past,
And all the things that be;
Thou know'st also what is to come,
Nothing is hid from Thee.

We come, Lord, to thy throne of grace
Where mercy does abound,
Desiring mercy for our sin,
To heal our sin's deep wound.

O Lord, we need not to repeat
What we do beg and crave;
For Thou dost know, before we ask,
The thing which we would have.

100

Mercy, O Lord! mercy we ask;
This is the total sum:
For mercy, Lord, is all our prayer;
Lord, let thy mercy come!

STERNHOLD.

§ XXI.

CHAP. VI. 19—23.

Where our treasure is to be laid up.

19 ¶ 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 'But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Prov. xxiii. 4. 1 Tim. vi. 17. Heb. xiii. 5. Jam. v. 1, &c.—Ecclus. xxix. 11. ch. xix. 21. Luke xii. 33, 34; & xviii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 19. 1 Pet. i. 4.—Luke xi. 34, 36.

READER. Here we are mercifully warned against trusting in uncertain riches, and encouraged to

aspire after a better, and an enduring inheritance.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.—For yourselves; there is something very emphatic in that expression in this place. It reminds us that our Lord is here speaking of that which affects our own personal, everlasting interests. What we do, or what we neglect to do, in matters of religion, we do or neglect, most entirely, for ourselves; for our own benefit, or to our own destruction. And well may those words of our Saviour be present to our minds, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

For yourselves!—Yes; when men are living intent on heaping up riches, they think that they are labouring for themselves. But how often does it happen that they labour, not for their own profit or pleasure, but for the temporal benefit of others; although they little contemplate or intend such a result! "Surely every man"—every one that is, who proceeds upon these worldly principles—"walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them" (Ps. xxxix. 6). And it is with reference to this vain, earthly-minded, unprofitable labour, that the wise man speaks in the second chapter of Ecclesiastes, "What hath man, of all his labour, and of

the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrow, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity" (Eccles. ii. 22, 23).

Treasures.—By this term our Lord denotes that which men regard as their chief good,—their great, ultimate, satisfying portion. A treasure, in the full sense of the expression, is something peculiarly precious; that which we prize above all other things, which we are especially anxious to gain or to keep; and it is usually understood of something which exists in sufficient abundance, a large or ample store of that which is good and valuable; and which is regarded as a fixed or permanent possession, something which is reserved as a supply for a future time of need. Now, if we make anything upon earth our treasure, in the complete and highest sense of the expression, we are miserably deceiving ourselves. Is there anything here which we ought to prize and value as our highest good? Any possession or pleasure so large and ample that it can satisfy all our desires and wants? Anything which will last for ever, or endure as long as ourselves? Certainly not. And therefore all things here below are utterly unfit to form our treasure! If we regard them in this light, we shall suffer disappointment, and something more. For "they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. vi. 9).

Moth and rust doth corrupt.—The things of this world are liable to corruption and decay; they perish in the using; they contain in themselves the elements of destruction. *Thieves break through and steal.* We are liable to lose them also by acts of open violence from without. And even if we keep them as long as we live, that great thief death will come at last, and take them from us. So surely do riches “make to themselves wings and fly away.” Therefore, let us not set our hearts upon them; let us not “trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. vi. 17). Let not any earthly comfort or apparent good be the object of our inordinate affection, of our eager and restless pursuit, of our vain trust and confidence. Let us not seek to lay up our treasure on earth.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.—Desire, as your chief good, the favour of God, and those good things which God has promised to bestow, for Christ’s sake, upon those who love him. Divine favour and blessings may well be prized above all other possessions: the gifts of God, in themselves abundantly sufficient for the comfort and welfare of the soul, can never be too ardently desired, or too diligently increased; and they are such as will last for ever—enduring throughout all eternity, to the full and adequate satisfaction of our immortal souls. These, then, are our treasures. Let us continually regard them in this light; and “covet earnestly the best

gifts.” And let us heartily thank God, our heavenly Father, who has placed those treasures within our reach, through the merits and work of our adorable Redeemer! “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” says St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 3, 4), “which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;” “Where,” to use our Saviour’s own emphatic language, “neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.—Your desires and affections will certainly be carried out after the things which, whether truly or falsely, you regard as your chief or highest good. We may know what things we have chosen for our treasure, “by our high estimation of the worth of them—by our sensible apprehension of the want of them—by the torrent and tendency of our affection towards them—and by our laborious diligence and endeavours in the pursuit of them.” Well, indeed, may we adopt that confession and prayer of the Psalmist, “My soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken thou me according to thy word!”

The light of the body is the eye; i. e., the eye is the organ which makes use of light for the guidance and direction of the different members of the body; *if, therefore, thine eye be single*—i. e., sound, in good

ST. MATTHEW VI. 19—23.

health, and so rightly discharging its office, *thy whole body shall be full of light*—all your faculties will be guided by the light which is shed around you; *but if thine eye be evil*—i. e., diseased—*thy whole body will be full of darkness*—all will be in confusion and disorder; it will be the same as though you were enveloped in darkness. By this very simple comparison our Lord calls our attention to the necessity of purity and simplicity of intention, or a correct practical judgment concerning the chief good, or the means of happiness. Our intentions, practical judgment, and consequent affections, are to the soul precisely what the eye is to the body, inasmuch as they become the guides and directors of all its motions. The eye of the soul is sound or healthy, when it is our great “design to ‘know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent;’ to know him with suitable affections, loving him as he hath loved us; to serve God (as we love him) with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; and to enjoy God in and above all things, in time and in eternity.”

If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.—If the supreme object of our affections, desires, and aims, be the world, instead of God, what confusion and ruin will follow! “If the intention, which ought to enlighten the whole soul, to fill it with knowledge, and love, and peace; and which, in fact, it does so long as it is single,” or pure, “so long as it aims at God alone,” or above all

things; “if this be darkness—if it aims,” chiefly, “at anything besides God—and, consequently, cover the soul with darkness instead of light, with ignorance and error, with sin and misery, O how great is that darkness! It is the very smoke which ascends out of the bottomless pit! It is the essential night, which reigns in the lowest deep, in the land of the shadow of death!”

HYMN.

Great God! our souls with wonder view
The bounties of thy grace;
How much bestow'd, how much reserv'd,
For them that seek thy face!

Thy liberal hand, with worldly bliss,
Oft makes their cups run o'er!
And in the covenant of thy love
They find diviner store.

Good Lord! what treasures yet unknown
Are lodg'd in worlds to come!
If such the mercies of the way,
How happy is our home!

And what shall mortal worms reply?
Or how such goodness own?
But 'tis our joy that, Lord, to thee
Thy servants' hearts are known.

Thine eyes shall read those grateful thoughts
No language can express;
Yet, when our liveliest thanks we pay,
Our debts do most increase.

Since time's too short, all-gracious God,
To utter all thy praise,
Loud to the honour of thy name
Eternal hymns we'll raise.

OLNEY H.

§ XXII.

CHAP. VI. 24—34.

Of serving God and Mammon.—Christ exhorteth not to be careful in worldly things, but to seek God's kingdom.

24 ¶¶ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

a Luke xvi. 13. y Gal. i. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17. Jam. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15.—s Pa. iv. 22. Luke xii. 22, 23. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7.—o Job xxxviii. 41. Pa. cxlvii. 9. Luke xii. 24, &c.—p See 1 Kin. iii. 13. Pa. xxxvii. 25. Mark x. 30. Luke xii. 31. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

READER. Our Lord solemnly assures us that we cannot serve God and Mammon; that is to say, we cannot yield to those two ruling principles, the love of God and the love of the world, at the same time. These are two masters of opposite interests,—each of them claiming supreme affection, and neither of them disposed to be satisfied with anything less. The service here meant denotes an entire devotion

ST. MATTHEW VI. 24—34.

and obedience,—such as that which was claimed by a master from a slave; and more complete, inasmuch as it is voluntary. Is not this the kind of service which many a man renders to the world? Is it not that which God claims from *us* when he says, “My son, give me thy heart?” or when, upon the ground of the great work of our redemption, the Apostle says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service?” (Rom. xii. 1.)—Now, we cannot serve both these masters at once. The love of God must displace the love of the world; or, if our supreme affections be given to the world, then we depart from the love and service of our God. But we must make our choice. “Choose ye whom ye will serve.”—And the verse before us speaks to us, as it were in the language of Elijah on a memorable occasion, when he “came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings xviii. 21.

He will hate the one, and love the other; that is, he will love one more than the other. The question is concerning supremacy.—Thus it is said that Jacob hated Leah; that is, loved her less than Rachel. And God says, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated;” that is, I have distinguished Jacob by a preference, and peculiar tokens of my favour.

Take no thought for your life; that

is, be not over anxious about the things of the present life,—let them not form the chief and absorbing objects of your care.

Not that our Lord encourages us to be careless or improvident about our temporal concerns. Far from it. Slothfulness and improvidence are repeatedly condemned in Holy Scripture. And what says St. Paul? “This we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them which are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.” 2 Thess. iii. 10—12. And again, “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” 1 Tim. v. 8.

But what our Saviour here so pointedly condemns is that spirit of eager, anxious, overwhelming solicitude concerning temporal affairs, into which men of the world,—those whose hearts are set upon earthly things, and who are without the comfort of a sure trust and confidence in God,—are apt to fall. If a man practically believes that the things which are seen are his greatest good, he is of course most eager and anxious to possess them. If he has no reliance upon the superintending providence of a heavenly Father, and is persuaded that his attainment of earthly good depends entirely upon his own skill and ex-

ertion, then he is likely to be speedily involved in distracting cares and anxieties in the pursuit of his favourite object. And it is this compound of eagerness and distrust against which our blessed Saviour so affectionately and solemnly warns us in this passage. Oh what a mournful spectacle in the sight of Heaven is the care-worn, anxious, distrustful spirit of an earthly-minded man! It is idolatry, with a sore part of its punishment already annexed to it! It is captivity, galled and encumbered with its chain!

How forcible are the arguments with which our heavenly Teacher here seeks to arm our minds against this kind of sin and misery! He says,

Is not the life more than meat, i. e. food, and the body than raiment? If God has given you the greater, will he not also provide you with the less? If he has given you life and a body—wonderful beyond all measure in themselves—will he not be ready to give you those things which are inferior and subordinate? Will he not supply you with food and raiment, in the way of his providence, and according to the methods of his own appointment? Again,

Behold the fowls of the air.—Consider how God provides for the smaller and weaker creatures of his hand. As the experience of God's greater mercies may lead you to hope for the less, so, on the other hand, your observation of his care for the lower parts of the creation, may encourage you to hope for his protection of yourselves, who rank

among the highest of his creatures upon earth.—Let us learn lessons of confidence and comfort from considering the riches and bounty of Divine Providence bestowed upon even the tenants of the forest and the air. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry;" Ps. cxlvii. 9. "These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them meat in due season;" Ps. civ. 27. The hundred and fourth and hundred and forty-seventh Psalms form a beautiful commentary upon this part of our Saviour's discourse.—Our Lord adds another argument against worldly anxiety; he says,

Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?—

Hereby we are reminded of our weakness; and of the utter uselessness of our most strenuous endeavours, except so far as it may please God to bless and prosper them. How would it repress our painful anxiety and laborious sorrow concerning the things of this life did we but rightly believe and feel our total dependence upon the will and providence of God! "This is the victory that overcometh the world" in every form, "even our faith."—Hear another argument;

Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.—How easily can God, if it please him, bestow upon us all that we need, even although we should be rendered unable to use any endeavours on our own behalf! He clothes the grass of the field, which grows without any efforts of its own; although its beauty is short-

ST. MATTHEW VI. 24—34.

lived, and speedily destroyed. The tender plant, one day flourishing in its beauty, is found perhaps the next day, dried up and withered, and used for the purpose of heating an oven. What then if a servant of God be thrown upon a bed of sickness, and thus be unable to labour for his livelihood;—will God forsake him? Let him not fear this, as long as a bird flies through the air, or a blade of grass is growing in the field!—Once more;

After all these things do the Gentiles seek.—It is argument against the indulgence of a restless and worldly spirit, that it agrees with the character of the ignorant and idolatrous heathen. And shall the children of God be like them?—And lastly,

Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.—It is not pretended that food and raiment are not necessary for you. The need is real;—but then God knows it. Have you the faith of a Christian? Then take the comfort of a Christian,—"My God shall supply all your need."

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;—Make it your chief concern to retain an interest in God's favour, and to have a heart conformed to the divine will;—and then rest satisfied that *all these things shall be added unto you*;—they shall be given as an overplus;—you shall have that which you chiefly desire, and enough of worldly possessions besides. Let us remember that Solomon asked for wisdom; and then God gave him wisdom and also that which he did not ask, "both riches

and honour." And in like manner he will give all his faithful servants as much of this world's wealth as may be really good for them. "Godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Discharge the duties of every day with diligence, in their proper time. These will provide you with sufficient employment; and will bring with them abundant trials of your faithfulness and patience. But do not afflict your minds with needless fears or anxious speculations concerning the time to come.

How intimate an acquaintance with human nature and the truth of things does our divine Teacher display in the passage now before us! How does he direct our attention to some of the secret, but most fruitful, sources of human happiness and woe! Well may we be lost in admiration of his wisdom and his love as they appear in the simple, but important, instructions which he here vouchsafes to give. May we have grace to receive and to act upon these holy lessons! They may be summed up in two short passages of the word of inspiration;—"Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content;" 1 Tim. vi. 8; and, "Casting all your care upon Him; for he careth for you;" 1 Pet. v. 7.

ST. MATTHEW VII. 1—6.

HYMN.

Oh happy soul, that lives on high,
 While men lie grovelling here!
 His hopes are fix'd above the sky,
 And faith forbids his fear.

His conscience knows no secret stings,
 While peace and joy combine
 To form a life whose holy springs
 Are hidden and divine.

He waits in secret on his God;
 His God in secret sees:
 Let earth be all in arms abroad,
 He dwells in heav'nly peace.

His pleasures rise from things unseen,
 Beyond this world and time;
 Where neither eyes nor ears have been,
 Nor thoughts of sinners climb.

He wants no pomp nor royal throne,
 To raise his figure here;
 Content and pleas'd to live unknown,
 Till Christ, his life, appear.

He looks to heaven's eternal hill
 To meet that glorious day;
 But, patient, waits his Saviour's will
 To fetch his soul away.

WATTS.

§ XXIII.

CHAP. VII. 1—6.

*Christ reproveth rash judgment; and
 forbiddeth to cast holy things to dogs.*

JUDGE ^anot, that ye be not
 judged.

2 For with what judgment
 ye judge, ye shall be judged:
^aand with what measure ye
 mete, it shall be measured to
 you again.

3 ^aAnd why beholdest thou
 the mote that is in thy bro-
 ther's eye, but considerest not
 the beam that is in thine own
 eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to
 thy brother, Let me pull out
 the mote out of thine eye; and,
 behold, a beam *is* in thine own
 eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast
 out the beam out of thine own
 eye; and then shalt thou see
 clearly to cast out the mote out
 of thy brother's eye.

6 ¶ ^aGive not that which is
 holy unto the dogs, neither cast
 ye your pearls before swine, lest
 they trample them under their
 feet, and turn again and rend
 you.

^a Luke vi. 37. Rom. ii. 1; & xiv. 3, 4, 10, 12. 1 Cor.
 iv. 3, 5. Jam. iv. 11, 12.—^b Mark iv. 24. Luke vi. 28.
 —^c Luke vi. 41, 42.—^d Pro. ix. 7, 8; & xxiii. 9. Acts
 xiii. 45, 46.

READER. The habit of censorious and uncharitable judgment is an effect and a token of man's corrupt and depraved nature. It is a fruit of inordinate self-love; a symptom of that evil state of mind in which a man becomes jealous of the reputation of other men, lest it should detract something from his own credit and good name. Thus does the idolatry of self set a man at variance with his neighbour, while it leads him astray, or keeps him at a distance, from his God. But the Lord Jesus Christ, by his teaching and by his grace, opposes this corrupt nature, with all its evil tendencies. So here:—*Judge not.* Do not take pleasure in detecting the faults of others; do not be forward in condemning

ST. MATTHEW VII. 1—6.

them. And we are reminded by an inspired Apostle that there is something presumptuous and arrogant, as well as malicious, in this evil practice. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth;" Rom. xiv. 4. And St. James says, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" (iv. 12.)

We are not forbidden to form an opinion concerning the conduct of men, or to express that opinion when circumstances may require it; but it is declared inconsistent with our duty, and with a right state of feeling, to form an unfavourable opinion hastily, rashly, or with satisfaction to ourselves, and to declare such opinion unnecessarily, harshly, or with pleasure, and in a tone of triumph or exultation. In one word, every kind of judgment and censure is *unchristian* and *unholy* which is *inconsistent* with true brotherly love—with that charity which "thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;" 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 6.

That ye be not judged.—Our Saviour warns those men who are prone to censure and condemn their neighbours, that they must expect to be exposed to the same kind of harsh judgment and unfeeling calumny in return. *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* The world will act upon the same principles towards you, as those which you have adopted towards your brethren.—And our reflection on this head must extend not only to the

common experience of life, but also, and more especially, to the righteous judgment of God, and what we may expect to receive at his hands. How solemn is that warning which we have received, "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy!" James ii. 13.—"Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ;" Rom. xiv. 10. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts;" 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Why beholdest thou the mote, i.e., the splinter, that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?—How great is the folly, as well as the wickedness, of men, who not only censure their brethren unjustly, but often condemn them for those very faults concerning which they are ten times more guilty themselves. Lamentable blindness! And sometimes the failings which they discover, or pretend to discover, in other men, are of a nature less criminal and aggravated than those with which they are themselves chargeable. How offensive in the sight of Heaven must be the spectacle of a man busied in denouncing the smaller offences of his neighbours, but ignorant or careless of still more grievous wickedness committed by himself! And God knows what is in the hearts of all men. What said our Saviour to the clamorous accusers of the woman

ST. MATTHEW VII. 1—6.

taken in adultery? "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." "And," it is added, "they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last;" John viii. 7—9.

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye.—Let it be our first and principal employment, in dependence on divine grace, to remove the defects and blemishes of our own character, and to make our own lives harmless and free from blame. Let it be the object of our great ambition, and our earnest endeavour, to fulfil the injunction of the Apostle, "Do all things without murmurings or disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life;" Phil. ii. 14—16.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.—In this verse our Saviour gives us a caution concerning the promulgation of religious truth, and the use of holy ordinances. By "that which is holy," and "pearls," he denotes the doctrine of the Gospel, religious instruction, and the means of grace. By "dogs" and "swine," he designates evil and ungodly men; men of perverse or malignant tempers, and corrupt minds.

It is a solemn and very painful thought, that there are some profligate, hardened, and abandoned sinners, who place themselves beyond the reach of religious ordinances,

even according to the decision of the merciful Saviour himself. But the verse before us is plain and explicit on this subject. And, in order to set the matter in as clear a light as possible, I will read the explanation of our Saviour's precept, as given by several judicious commentators. "Dogs' signify men who spurn, oppose, and abuse the doctrine of the Gospel; men of peculiar sourness and malignity of temper, who meet it like growling and quarrelsome dogs; 2 Pet. ii. 22; Rev. xxii. 15. 'Swine' denotes those who would trample the precepts under feet; men of impure lives; corrupt and polluted, profane, obscene, and sensual, who would not know the value of the Gospel, and who would tread it down as swine would pearls; 2 Pet. ii. 22; Prov. xi. 22."—"By 'that which is holy,' understand the word and ordinances in general, but admonition and reproof in particular; by 'dogs' and 'swine,' incorrigible and unreclaimable sinners, hardened scorers of holy things. It is a proverbial speech, expressing how sure charitable reprehensions are to be cast away upon incorrigible sinners. Learn, first, that it is possible for sinners to arrive at such a height and pitch in wickedness and sin that it may be a Christian's duty not to admonish or reprove them. And observe, secondly, how Christ provides, as for the honour of his word, so for the safety of those who publish it."—"As it is not every one that is fit to reprove, so it is not every one that is fit to be reprov'd. Though to seek men's salvation by teaching and

ST. MATTHEW VII. 7—11.

reproof be a work of great moment, when used in season, to them that are capable of it; yet, take this rule,—pretend not duty to teach and reprove when it is likely to do more hurt than good. Some men are hardened scorners—and some hateful persecutors. To such as those, holy counsel, doctrine, and reproof, is but like casting sacramental or consecrated bread to the dogs, or pearls before swine.”

Awful indeed is the fact that there are dogs who are ready to bite even those who should offer them the bread of life, and swine who would trample under feet the pearl of great price!

These solemn words of our merciful Redeemer deserve to be often and deeply considered in many points of view.—Well may they lead us to unite with increasing fervour in that wise and humble petition, “From hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, good Lord, deliver us!” And great is the encouragement which may be hence derived by all those who are engaged in imparting religious instruction to the young. Theirs is indeed a good, and hopeful, undertaking. They are employed in sowing heavenly seed in hearts which, by God’s blessing, may now receive it to their eternal profit, but, if neglected a few years longer, would perhaps be involved in the ruin and condemnation implied in that precept, give not that which is holy to the dogs, cast not your pearls before swine!

HYMN.

How sweet, how heavenly, is the sight,
When those who love the Lord
In one another’s peace delight,
And so fulfil his word.

O may we feel each brother’s sigh,
And with him bear a part;
May sorrows flow from eye to eye,
And joy from heart to heart!

Free us from envy, scorn, and pride,
Our wishes fix above;
May each his brother’s failing hide,
And show a brother’s love!

Let love, in one delightful stream,
Through every bosom flow;
And union sweet, and fond esteem,
In every action glow.

Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above;
And he’s an heir of heaven that finds
His bosom glow with love.

§ XXIV.

CHAP. VII. 7—11.

Christ exhorteth to prayer.

7 ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more

ST. MATTHEW VII. 7—11.

shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ?

ech. xxi. 22. *Mark* xi. 24. *Luke* xi. 9, 10; & xviii. 1. *John* xiv. 13; & xv. 7; & xvi. 23, 24. *Jam.* i. 5, 6. *1 John* iii. 22; & v. 14, 15.—*f* *Pro.* viii. 17. *Jer.* xxix. 12, 13.—*g* *Luke* xi. 11, 12, 13.—*h* *Gen.* vi. 5; & viii. 21.

READER. In these "gracious words" of our blessed Saviour the nature and benefits of prayer are most strikingly set forth.—The state of mind in which a true suppliant approaches the throne of grace, and the merciful reception which he finds at the hands of his heavenly Father, are brought before our minds in a manner capable of affording at once direction and encouragement.

Ask.—This implies a sense of want. It is the man who practically feels his need of anything that is disposed to ask for it,—to prefer a suit or petition to another who may be able to confer the desired benefit. It is the child who feels hunger that asks his parent for a piece of bread. And so, before there can be real prayer there must be a sense of our want of the bounty which God is able to bestow. How deep was this consciousness of need in Bartimæus, when he said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight;"—in the woman of Canaan, when she cried, "Lord, help me;"—and in the lame man at the gate of the temple, when he "gave heed unto" Peter and John, "expecting to receive something from them!" Such a sense of want, spiritual and temporal, mingles in the fervent and effectual prayer of a righteous man.

And asking implies, moreover, hu-

mility of mind. A man may feel his need, but at the same time he may be too proud to confess it, and to ask for relief. "I cannot dig," said the unjust steward in the parable, "to beg I am ashamed." So it is with the proud heart in the presence of God. It endeavours to stifle and keep out of sight a consciousness of deficiency, misery, and want, rather than to acknowledge its helplessness, and cast itself in deep humility before him who alone can administer relief. But the man who asks, as a child of his parent, as a beggar at the hands of a rich man, and in that temper of mind to which the promise is annexed, is one of those concerning whom it has been declared, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Seek.—This implies earnestness and diligence;—a sense of the value of that which is desired, and a fixed determination to lose no opportunity of obtaining it. "We must not only ask, but seek; we must second our prayers with our endeavours; we must, in the use of appointed means, *seek* for that which we *ask* for, else we tempt God. When the dresser of the vineyard asked for a year's respite for the barren fig-tree, he added, 'I will dig about it;' *Luke* xiii. 7, 8. God gives knowledge and grace to those that search the Scriptures, and wait at Wisdom's gate; and power against sin to those that avoid the occasions of it."

Knock.—This denotes perseverance and importunity. Humble, earnest, importunate prayer is indeed a knocking at the gate of heaven.

ST. MATTHEW VII. 7—11.

And they who feel that they are making application at their Father's house, will knock again and again, and not be easily repulsed. It was thus with the widow of Canaan in her supplications to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was thus, in earlier times, with the patriarch Jacob.—“Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be no more called Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and men, and hast prevailed;” Gen. xxxii. 24, 26—28. —In like manner our blessed Saviour assures us that true prayer shall not be unsuccessful; He says,

It shall be given you;—ye shall find;—it shall be opened to you.—How plain and positive is this precious word of promise! And lest any individual should find room to doubt of the success of his petitions on account of his peculiar circumstances or trials, our Lord adds, *Every one that asketh receiveth.*—No one that truly prays, in a manner consistent with the word of God, can pray in vain. The words of the Lord Jesus recorded in this passage “are as strongly binding on the side of God as ‘Thou shalt do no murder’ is on the side of man. Bring Christ's word, and Christ's sacrifice, with thee; and not one of heaven's blessings can be denied thee.”

How much more shall your Father

q

which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!—How powerful the argument, how consolatory and cheering the assurance, which our Lord conveys to us by placing before our minds the tenderness and compassion of an earthly parent towards his children, and then declaring that the goodness and loving-kindness of God towards those that fear him, and his readiness and ability to answer their petitions, are far greater! *How much more!* God is, in the highest sense, the Father of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom they have received the adoption. And with the *much more* of this place we may well connect that of the Apostle St. Paul in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans,—“If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Jas. v. 16.—“By the infallible testimony of Heaven we are authorised to affirm constantly that there is an efficacy in the prayer of faith, which, though inexplicable by our feeble understandings, must, throughout all ages, continue to avail as much as it did in the days of those patriarchs, prophets, and righteous men who, as princes, had power with God, when, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, they had grace to serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear. The Lord is ever nigh

ST. MATTHEW VII. 7—11.

unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit, when, taking with them the words which inspired wisdom has taught them to utter, they lift up their desires at his footstool, not seeking great things for themselves, or panting after the dust of the earth, or sighing for the vain delights of the sons of men, but thirsting and longing for the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and who, being justified by faith, has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have no encouragement to hope that by taking thought for temporal satisfactions we shall find grace in the sight of the Lord; but if we aspire after the best gifts which are the heritage of the faithful, seeking first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, we believe, and are sure, that his Divine power will give us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us unto glory and virtue. Though our Father in the heavens knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him, and though the purposes of his everlasting kindness are often fulfilled more substantially by withholding than by granting the desires which we naturally cherish, it is only to them who worship Him in spirit and in truth that He has promised to do exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think; and we have no more solid ground to expect that we shall receive without asking, or that we shall find without seeking, than the husbandman has to look for an abundant

harvest springing up in the fields which he has neither planted nor watered, or than the merchant has to calculate on receiving his own with usury for the talent which has been tied up in a napkin, or buried in the earth."

HYMN.

What shall we ask of God in prayer?
Whatever good we want;
Whatever man may seek to share,
Or God in mercy grant.

Father of all our mercies;—Thou
In whom we move and live,
Hear us in heaven, thy dwelling now,
And answer, and forgive.

When bound with sins and trespasses
From wrath we fain would flee,
Lord, cancel our unrighteousness,
And set the captives free.

When harass'd by ten thousand foes
Our helplessness we feel;
O give the weary soul repose,
The wounded spirit heal.

When dire temptations gather round,
And threaten or allure,
By storm or calm, in Thee be found
A refuge strong and sure.

When age advances, may we grow
In faith, and hope, and love:
And walk in holiness below
To holiness above.

When earthly joys and cares depart,
Desire and envy cease,
Be thou the portion of my heart,
In Thee may we have peace.

When flames these elements destroy
And worlds in judgment stand,
May we lift up our heads with joy
And meet at thy right hand.

MONTGOMERY.

§ XXV.

CHAP. VII. 12.

12 Therefore all things ¹ whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for ²this is the law and the prophets.

¹ Tob. iv. 15. Luke vi. 31. & Lev. xix. 18. ch. xxii. 4. Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. Gal. v. 14. 1 Tim. i. 5.

READER. This great precept deserves a very attentive consideration; and I am induced to adopt it as the single subject for our present contemplation, especially as I am desirous of bringing before your minds some valuable remarks which have been made, by men of deep piety and sober judgment, in connection with this comprehensive rule of Christian morality.

Therefore.—Since God is ready to be so good and bountiful towards yourselves, be ye also ready to be just and kind to your neighbours. Since you have received this encouragement to offer up prayers to your heavenly Father in hope of a gracious answer, take care that while you present your petitions you are in charity with all men,—who, like yourselves, are children of the universal Parent.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.—This has been called the Saviour's golden rule. It is indeed a precept which applies to all the duties which we owe to our neighbours. And even a heathen emperor was so

struck with admiration at the substance of its meaning that he caused it to be written (negatively) in letters of gold, over the gate of his palace.—Let us pray that it may be written and engraven, by the Holy Spirit, on the tables of our hearts!

“The equity of this rule,” says one, “is so visible, that it needs no proofs; the universal reason of mankind agrees to it in theory, although their appetites and passions may cause them to neglect it in practice.”—“It commends itself, as soon as heard, to every man's conscience and understanding; insomuch that no man can knowingly offend against it, without carrying his condemnation in his own breast.”

“It may be understood in either a positive or negative sense. If understood in a negative sense, the meaning is ‘Whatever ye would not that men should do to you, do ye not unto them.’ Here is a plain rule, always ready at hand. In all matters relating to your neighbour, make his case your own. Suppose the circumstance to be changed and yourself to be just as he is now. And then beware that you indulge no temper or thought, that no word pass out of your lips, that you take no step, which you would have condemned in him, upon such a change of circumstances.—If understood in a direct or positive sense, the plain meaning of it is, ‘Whatsoever you could reasonably desire of him, supposing yourself to be in his circumstances, that do, to the utmost of your power, to every child of man.’

“To apply this in one or two ob-

that were it not for the corruption of human nature, which triumphs in nothing more than in perverting and debasing that which should reform it, one might pronounce it to hold good in all cases without bounds or limitations. But, because the very best things are liable to abuse, and the wisest maxims may be stretched beyond the design and reason of them, it will be necessary so to restrain our present rule, that it may not lead us beyond what is lawful or reasonable to be done.

“1. We must confine it to things that are *lawful, or not prohibited by the word of God*. For else the Scriptures would be contradictory, if by this rule of doing as we would be done by we are obliged or allowed to do to others what by other plain or evident texts we are forbidden to do, or to desire. My friend desires me to tell a lie for him to excuse him, or to spread a false story about for his advantage; or, though he do not desire it, yet I think it would serve his interest—and what then? Though I myself should be so wicked, or so weak, as to desire the like of another, or be glad of its being done on my account, yet will this rule by no means justify my doing so for anybody else; because it is sinful for me either to tell a lie myself, or to desire that another should. Likewise it will be no excuse to a cheating gamester, if he gives the person he games with leave to cheat him if he can; nor to him that endeavours to make his companion drunk, that he is very willing to be made as drunk as himself; because cheating

and drunkenness are sins, and no pretence whatever can qualify the guilt. This maxim, therefore, of doing as we would be done by, was never designed to make men lawless, or such an absolute law to themselves, that whatsoever they can reciprocally desire, or submit to, should be lawful. It ought to be first known that the thing is lawful, before the rule can be applied; *which, strictly speaking, is not so much a law itself as a measure of performing other duties to our neighbour.*

“2. We must confine it to things that are *reasonable, or fit to be done*. Some things are lawful, which are not expedient. It is lawful for me to give away a good part of my estate, or any particular valuable possession that I have, to whomsoever I think fit; but, if a neighbour of mine should come to me, and with a serious face should desire me to settle such a lordship upon him, etc., I dare say all the world would agree that it was a very impudent and unreasonable request; and, though he should press me an hundred times over with the rule of doing as I would be done by (for it is not to be denied that I should gladly receive such a favour and benefaction myself from any other person), he would be as often told, it was a thing indecent to be asked, impertinent to be expected, and unfit to be done. To instance another thing not reducible to this rule;—no judge or magistrate is obliged thereby to pardon a notorious offender against the laws, upon thinking with himself, that if he were in the malefactor's place, he would

ST. MATTHEW VII. 12.

desire to be pardoned. The rule does not apply here; because, though it is natural to an offender to deprecate the punishment due to his offence, it is not fit or reasonable that the magistrate should hearken to him; for he acts in a public capacity, and must consider the reverence due to the laws, and the peace and good order of the public, more than the benefit of any private person. Again;—one who is in very indifferent circumstances, desires me to be bound with him for a considerable sum, which he is not likely to pay, and if I pay it myself, it will be a great detriment and wrong to my family; but I am not by this rule obliged to answer his desire, though I should be glad, if the case were my own, as it is his, that another would do the same for me; because it is reasonable I should consider my own family and circumstances in the first place; I am to love my neighbour as myself, but I am not obliged to love him better, and to do myself a great injury, in order to do him a benefit. Many other instances might be given, but there is no need to enlarge. Religion and prudence must govern us in this, as well as in every other duty.

“I will therefore take a short and general view of what is indeed the proper application of this rule. Let a child, a subject, or a servant, but ask himself without partiality, what honour, what submission, what obedience he would think were due to him, were he himself a father, magistrate, or master; and his answer to this would be a rule for his own

behaviour towards those that are so related to him. The same will hold in all other relative duties, and hereby may be discerned the equity of reverencing superiors, of being civil and courteous to equals, gentle to inferiors, and just and charitable to all mankind. It would keep us from an insolent and surly carriage towards any one, from despising and ridiculing, from upbraiding and provoking, if we do but seriously consider how ill we ourselves could bear this from another. It would teach us to forbear and forgive, because we desire in our turns to be borne with and forgiven. It would make us candid and good-natured, in putting the best interpretation upon the words and actions of others, if we but reflect how reasonable we think it that another should deal so candidly with us. The poor may be convinced by it, of the unreasonableness of slandering and envying the rich the advantage of their riches: and these would also see the unreasonableness of refusing relief and assistance to the poor, because each of them would, in the other's circumstances, expect a contrary behaviour.

“Let us be exactly just in all our dealings with others, as we would assuredly have others just in their dealings with us.

“These are the chief general instances wherein this rule of doing as we would be done by must take place. Particulars are reducible thereto by every man's private conscience, as circumstances arise to bring them under consideration.”

§ XXVI.

CHAP. VII. 13—20.

Christ exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate; and to beware of false prophets.

13 ¶ 'Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 ¶ Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 ¶ "Beware of false prophets, "which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ^oravening wolves.

16 ^pYe shall know them by their fruits. ^rDo men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so ^revery good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

1 Luke xiii. 24.—† Or, *How*.—‡ Deu. xiii. 8. Jer. xxiii. 16. ch. xxiv. 4, 5, 11, 24. Mark xiii. 22. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Eph. v. 6. Col. ii. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. 1 John iv. 1. 2 Mic. iii. 5. 2 Tim. iii. 5. 2 Acts xx. 29, 30.—^p ver. xx. ch. xii. 33. ^q Luke vi. 43, 44.—† Jer. xi. 19. ch. xii. 33.—† ch. iii. 10.

READER. Our Saviour here speaks of two ways or courses of life, in one or the other of which all men are walking; and two ends, at one or other of which all will at last arrive. He compares men to travellers walking in different roads. The way of sin, which leads to destruction, he likens to a broad road, having a very wide gate at its entrance; and the way of holiness to a narrow road, at the beginning of which the gate is small and apparently inconvenient.

Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.—By the wide gate and the broad road, we understand "a thoughtless mind, a carnal heart, and a wicked life; all which, by unbelief, which refuses the only method of salvation, lead to certain and everlasting ruin."

"But you will ask, Why are these things so described? Why are they compared to a wide gate and a broad way? The reason is plain; for, as it is easy to go through a wide gate and to walk in a broad road, so the sinner finds no hindrance in entering on a life of sin, and little or no difficulty in pursuing it. Our corrupt nature strongly inclines us to sin. David says, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me' (Ps. li. 5); and that the wicked are 'estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.' Sin is in our very nature; and we walk in this road of our own accord; it is natural and pleasant to us; while we as naturally dislike the narrow road,

and despise those who walk in it. And besides, those who are in the broad road, meet with no hindrance from the world or from the devil." —Alas, many are they who follow this evil, but too easy, course; and if we follow the multitude, it will be to do evil.—But let us remember that it leadeth to destruction. "Death, eternal death, is at the end of it,—everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Whether it be the high way of open profaneness, or the back way of close hypocrisy, if it be a way of sin, it will be our ruin, if we repent not."

Strait, i.e. narrow, is the gate, and narrow, i.e. hemmed in, close, confined, is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.—That is to say, there are difficulties to be encountered both at the beginning, and throughout the course of a religious life.—The way that leads to life, is the way of repentance, faith, and holiness.

It is the way of *repentance or conversion*; and therefore it is narrow. "Repentance cannot but be painful, for it consists chiefly in a godly sorrow for sin, together with a firm resolution to forsake it, whatever it may cost us." Conversion is a strait gate, "hard to find and hard to get through; like a passage between two rocks (1 Sam. xiv. 4). There must be a new heart, and a new spirit, and old things must pass away. The bent of the soul must be changed; corrupt habits and customs broken off." Now a man naturally dislikes all this, and he shuns it, "as a man would avoid passing through a very

narrow and low door, when a more spacious one offers itself at the same time."

"*Faith* also is intended by the narrow way. 'By grace are ye saved through faith;' and without faith it is impossible to please God. True faith consists in so believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as to take him for our only Saviour; utterly renouncing all dependence on our own works and righteousness; submitting to be saved by the mere favour of God in Christ, as a poor beggar is relieved by an alms. Now, this is so contrary to our natural inclinations, and so humbling to a self-righteous spirit, that it may well be called a narrow way."

Holiness also is this narrow way. "Holiness consists in the conformity of our will to the will of God; it is produced by the power of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of a sinner. The law of God is written on his heart; whereby he is disposed to resist temptation, to forsake sin, and to practise obedience to the commands of God. In doing this, we must deny ourselves, take up our daily cross, and follow Christ. We must mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. We must crucify the old man of sin, and walk, not according to the course of the world, nor according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. In this way we cannot but meet with difficulties. We shall meet with continual opposition from our own corruption, the law in our members warring against the law of our minds. We shall also suffer reproach and contempt

from the world ; for ‘all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.’ And besides all this, God our heavenly Father sees it necessary to chastise us with the rod of affliction, of which all his children are partakers, for spiritual good.”

“Considering, therefore, the nature of Repentance, Faith, and Holiness, we clearly see how properly a true Christian may be said to enter upon a religious life by a strait gate, and to proceed in it by a narrow way.”

Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.—But is it not said concerning heavenly wisdom, or true religion, that “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace?” Does not our blessed Lord say, “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light?” And does not an Apostle declare “His commandments are not grievous?”

“I answer, the ways of religion are perfectly easy and pleasant in their own nature; the difficulty arises from the depravity and corruption of our nature. Angels do the will of God with entire ease and pleasure; for they have no sin in their nature to oppose it. But, through the power of sin in our hearts, the entrance into religion becomes painful and difficult; and through the remains of it in regenerate persons, more or less of that difficulty is found in the whole journey. Yet grace renders it practicable, and pleasant; so that no believer repents of his choice, or wishes to turn back because of the hardships he endures; but, like Moses of old, chooses ‘rather to suffer affliction

with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,’—and for the same good reason, having ‘respect unto the recompense of reward.’”

Enter ye in at the strait gate.—“Let us, by divine grace, resolve on eternal life at all events. On the one hand, here is a broad road, full of passengers, in which, it is true, the poor, paltry, perishing, but intoxicating, pleasures of sin may be enjoyed for a moment, though not without many a pang: and at the end of this course is — DESTRUCTION — misery, pains, torment, without mitigation, without end;—everlasting separation from the presence of God, the fountain of life; and confinement in chains of darkness, with devils and condemned spirits, to all eternity!—On the other hand, God has set before us the way of life. The entrance is strait, the way is narrow. Difficulties indeed there are; but grace lessens them all, and sweetens them all; so that the worst of Christ’s way is better than the best of Satan’s way; and, what is best of all, the end is eternal life. And oh, what tongue can tell, what heart conceive, what God has laid up for them that love him! Is there a redeemed soul in glory, who now repents of the pains he took in religion? Does he regret that he believed in the Son of God? Is he sorry that he walked in the ways of holiness? No; each glorified saint reviews, with ecstasy of joy, the rich grace of God, that enabled him to discover the danger of that broad

road in which he once travelled, and that placed his feet in the narrow, but sure and safe, road to eternal bliss! Obey then the words of our Lord, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.'

Beware of false prophets, i.e. false teachers. We must be on our guard against teachers of religion who act upon pretended authority (as when men found their arguments upon the authority of the church, instead of the authority of God speaking in his written word, which is the sole rule of faith),—and against those who appeal to the true authority, and yet preach false doctrine, inconsistent with the word of inspiration.—Such teachers sometimes come in sheep's clothing, and "wear a rough garment to deceive" (Zech. xiii. 4); endeavouring, for example, by the sobriety and austerity of their manners, and the meekness of their deportment, to induce us to love their church more than the Bible. God grant that we may never be deceived either by their rough garments or by their smooth speeches! *The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestant catholic Christians.* God will not deceive us; man may. Our heavenly Father is true; but those who have been vainly called fathers upon earth, have been the patrons of innumerable errors.

Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.—In giving a warning against evil and seducing teachers, our blessed Saviour mentions a criterion of men's real character and true worth, which applies to persons

of every rank and condition. Our works—not our words—are the proofs and demonstrations of our character. God looks for fruit in the life, and he is not satisfied with the mere profession of the lips. And, at the last great day, men will be judged according to their works. True "faith worketh by love:" and "faith without works is dead." And how unprofitable is such dead faith! Let us remember that the "axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire;" ch. iii. 10. (See also Ezek. xxxi. 12, 13; Dan. iv. 14; John xv. 6).—May we, by divine grace, be numbered among those to whom it can be truly said, "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life!" Rom. vi. 22.

HYMN I.

BROAD is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrower path
With here and there a traveller.

"Deny thyself and take thy cross,"
Is the Redeemer's great command;
Nature must count her gold but dross,
If she would gain the heavenly land.

WATTS.

HYMN II.

STRAIT is the way, the door is strait,
That leads to joys on high;
'Tis but a few that find the gate,
While crowds mistake and die.

Beloved self must be denied,
The mind and will renew'd;
Passion suppress'd, and patience tried,
And vain desires subdued.

Flesh is a dangerous foe to grace,
 'Tis fatal when it rules;
 Flesh must be humbled, pride abas'd,
 Lest they destroy our souls.
 Lord! can a feeble helpless worm
 Fulfil a task so hard?
 Thy grace must all the work perform,
 And give the free reward.

WATTS
 (slightly altered.)

§ XXVII.

CHAP. VII. 21—29.

Christ exhorteth not to be hearers, but doers, of the word; like houses builded on a rock, and not on the sand.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that

house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

† Hos. viii. 2. ch. xxv. 11, 12. Luke vi. 46; & xiii. 25. Acts xix. 13. Rom. ii. 13. James i. 22.—s Num. xxv. 4. John xi. 51. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.—s Ch. xxv. 12. Luke xiii. 25, 27. 3 Tim. ii. 19. Ps. v. 5; & vi. 8. ch. xxv. 41.—s Luke vi. 47, &c.—s Ch. xiii. 54. Mark i. 22; & vi. 2. Luke iv. 32.—s John vii. 46.

READER. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord.—Our Lord plainly declares to us the folly and vanity of religious profession without religious principle and practice. We learn from the first three verses of the passage which has been read, "that a bare name and profession of Christianity, without the practice of it,—a profession of faith and purposes of obedience, without actual obedience to the commands of God, will avail no person to salvation; and also that gifts, yea, extraordinary and miraculous gifts, are not to be rested in, or depended upon, as sufficient evidence for heaven and salva-

tion. Gifts are as the gold which adorns the temple; but grace is like the temple which sanctifies the gold."

A wise man, which built his house upon the rock.—A foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.—How plain and striking is the comparison by which our Saviour, in the conclusion of his discourse, sets forth, on the one hand, the wisdom and safety of those who hear his words and do them,—and, on the other, the folly and danger of those who do not obey the dictates of his heavenly wisdom. I cannot hope to give a more appropriate or profitable finish to our reflections on this truly divine and heavenly discourse, than by calling your attention to the words of an eminently pious and practical divine, in which this warning of our Saviour is employed as a topic of self-examination, and that too with especial reference to the particular duties and habits of piety inculcated throughout this portion of the divine word.

"How nearly does it concern every child of man practically to apply these things to himself;—diligently to examine on what foundation he builds, whether on a rock, or on the sand! How deeply are you concerned to inquire, What is the foundation of *my* hope? Whereon do I build my expectation of entering into the kingdom of heaven? Is it not built on the sand? Upon my orthodoxy or right opinions, which, by a gross abuse of words, I have called faith? Upon my having a set

scriptural than many others have? Alas, what madness is this! Surely this is building on the sand, or rather on the froth of the sea!—But, suppose I am convinced of this. Yet, am I not building my hope on what is equally unable to support it? Perhaps on my belonging to 'so excellent a church, reformed after the true Scripture model; blest with the purest doctrine, the most primitive liturgy, the most apostolical form of government.' These are, doubtless, so many reasons for praising God, as they may be so many helps to holiness; but they are not holiness itself; and if they are separated from it, they will profit me nothing; nay, they will leave me the more without excuse, and exposed to the greater condemnation. Therefore, if I build my hope on this foundation I am still building upon the sand.

"You cannot, you dare not, rest here. Upon what next will you build your hope of salvation? Upon your innocence? Upon your doing no harm;—your not wronging or hurting any one? Well; allow the plea to be true. You are just in all your dealings; you are an honest man; you pay every man his own; you neither cheat nor extort; you act fairly to all mankind; and you have a conscience towards God; you do not live in any known sin.—But, you may go thus far, and never come to heaven. When all this harmlessness flows from a right principle, it is the least part of the religion of Christ; but in you it does not flow from a right principle, and therefore is no part at all of religion; so that,

in grounding your hope of salvation on this, you are still building upon the sand.

“Do you go farther yet? Do you add, to the doing no harm, the attending all the ordinances of God? Do you, at all opportunities, partake of the Lord’s Supper? use public and private prayer? hear, and search the Scriptures, and meditate thereon? These things, likewise, ought you to have done from the time you first set your feet towards heaven. Yet these things also are nothing, being alone. They are nothing without the weightier matters of the law; and those you have forgotten; at least, you experience them not; faith, mercy, and the love of God; holiness of heart; heaven opened in the soul. Still, therefore, you build upon the sand.

“Over and above all this, are you zealous of good works? Do you, as you have time, do good unto all men? Do you feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction? Do you visit those that are sick? Relieve them that are in prison? Is any a stranger, and do you take him in? Do you even prophesy in the name of Christ? Then go and learn what is written, “By grace ye are saved through *faith*. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saved us.” Else thou art still on the sand.

“Lord! increase my faith, if I now believe. Else, give me faith, though but as a grain of mustard seed!—But, what doth it profit, if a man say “he hath faith, and have not

works? Can faith save him?” Oh no! That faith which hath not works, which does not produce both inward and outward holiness, which does not stamp the whole image of God upon the heart, and purify us as he is pure;—that faith which does not produce the whole of the religion described in the foregoing chapters, is not the faith of the Gospel, not the Christian faith, not the faith which leads to glory. O beware of this, above all other snares of the devil, of resting on an unholy, un-saving, faith! If thou layest stress on this, thou art lost for ever; thou still buildest thy house upon the sand. When the rain descends, and the floods come, it will surely fall, and great will be the fall of it.

“Now, therefore, build thou upon a rock. By the grace of God, know thyself. Know and feel that thou wast shapen in wickedness, and in sin did thy mother conceive thee; and that thou thyself hast been heaping sin upon sin ever since thou couldst discern good from evil. Own thyself guilty of eternal death; and renounce all hope of ever being able to save thyself. Be it all thy hope to be washed in His blood, and purified by His Spirit, who himself bare all thy sins “in his own body on the tree.” And abase thyself before Him, in a continual sense of thy total dependence on Him for every good thought, and word, and work, and of thy utter inability to all good, unless He *water thee every moment*.

“Now weep for your sins, and mourn after God, till he turn your heaviness into joy. And even then,

weep with them that weep, and for them that weep not for themselves. Mourn for the sins and miseries of mankind: and see, just before your eyes, the immense ocean of eternity, without a bottom or a shore, which has already swallowed up millions of millions, and is ready to devour those that yet remain. See here, the house of God eternal in the heavens; there, hell and destruction without a covering. And hence learn the importance of every moment, which just appears, and is gone for ever.

“Now add to your seriousness, meekness of wisdom. Hold an even scale as to all your passions, but in particular as to anger, sorrow, and fear. Calmly acquiesce in whatsoever is the will of God. Learn, in every state wherein you are, therewith to be content. Be mild to the good; be gentle toward all men; but especially toward the evil and unthankful. Beware not only of outward expressions of anger, such as calling thy brother *Raca*, or Thou fool! but of every inward emotion contrary to love, though it go no further than the heart. Be angry at sin, as an affront offered to the Majesty of heaven; but love the sinner still; like our Lord, who “looked round about upon the Pharisees with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.” He was grieved with the sinners; angry at the sin. Thus be thou “angry and sin not.”

“Now do thou hunger and thirst, not “for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.” And beware of

quenching that thirst (if it is already excited in thy soul) by what is vulgarly called religion, a poor dull farce, a religion of form, of outside show, which leaves the heart still cleaving to the dust as earthly and sensual as ever. Let nothing satisfy thee but the power of godliness, a religion that is spirit and life; the dwelling in God and God in thee; the entering in, by the blood of sprinkling, within the veil, and sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

“Now, seeing thou canst do all things through Christ strengthening thee, be merciful, as thy Father in heaven is merciful. Love thy neighbour as thyself. Love friends and enemies as thy own soul. And let thy love be long-suffering and patient towards all men. Let it be kind, soft, benign; inspiring thee with the most amicable sweetness, and the most fervent and tender affection. Let it rejoice in the truth, wheresoever it is found, the truth that is after godliness. Enjoy whatsoever brings glory to God, and promotes peace and good-will among men. In love, cover all things. Of the dead and the absent speak nothing but good. Believe all things which may any way tend to clear your neighbour's character; hope all things in his favour; and endure all things, triumphing over all opposition. For true love never faileth, in time or in eternity.

“Now be thou pure in heart; purified through faith from every unholy affection, cleansing thyself “from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfect-

ST. MATTHEW VIII. 1—13.

ing holiness in the fear of God." Being, through the power of his grace, purified from pride by deep poverty of spirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent passion, by meekness and mercifulness; from every desire but to please and enjoy God, by hunger and thirst after righteousness. Now love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy strength.

"In a word; let thy religion be the religion of the heart. Let it be deep in thy inmost soul. Be thou little, and base, and mean, and vile (beyond what words can express) in thy own eyes; amazed and humbled to the dust, by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Be serious. Let the whole stream of thy thoughts, words, and actions flow from the deepest conviction that thou standest on the edge of the great gulf of eternity. Let thy soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering towards all men; at the same time that all that is within thee is athirst for God, the living God; longing to awake up after his likeness, and to be satisfied with it. Be thou a lover of God and of all mankind. In this spirit, do and suffer all things. Thus show thy faith by thy works: thus do the will of thy Father which is in heaven. And as surely as thou now walkest with God on earth thou shalt also reign with him in glory."

PSALM XLVI.

God is our strength and refuge found,
A present help in danger near;
Though troubles gather thick around,
He is our stay.—We will not fear.

128

Not though earth's deep foundations shake,
Or mountains in the sea be hurl'd,
Though tempests roar, and billows break,
And dreadful tumult awe the world.

There is a river shall make glad
The city of our God most high;
Within her dwells th' eternal Lord!
She stands unmov'd; his help is nigh.

Earth's raging powers his rule disown;
God speaks; the earth dissolves with fear.
The Lord of Hosts is yet our own,
And Jacob's God our refuge near.

GILPIN.

§ XXVIII.

CHAP. VIII. 1—13.

Christ cleanseth the leper; healeth the centurion's servant.

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus saith unto him, "See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

5 ¶ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

ST. MATTHEW VIII. 1—13.

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, 'I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but 'speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10 When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But ^athe children of the kingdom 'shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

^a Mark i. 40, &c. Luke v. 12, &c.—^b ch. ix. 30. Mark v. 43. ^c Lev. xiv. 3, 4, 10. Luke v. 14.—^d Luke vii. 1, &c.—^e Luke xv. 19, 21. ^f Pa. cvii. 26.—^g Gen. xii. 3. ^h Is. ii. 2, 3; & xi. 10. Mal. i. 11. Luke xiii. 29. Acts x. 45; & xi. 18; & xiv. 27. Rom. xv. 9, &c. Eph. iii. 6.—ⁱ ch. xxi. 43. ^j ch. xiii. 42, 50; & xxii. 15; & xxiv. 51; & xxv. 30. Luke xiii. 28. ^k 2 Pet. ii. 17. Jude xiii.

Reader. This is one of the many portions of Holy Scripture which are understood as soon as read. I need hardly tell you that the *leprosy* was a loathsome and fatal disease; and so contagious, that persons infected with it were shut out of society: a lively picture of sin, ruinous to the soul, odious in the sight of God, and that which disqualifies men for the society of heaven.

A centurion was a subaltern officer, or captain of a company, in the Roman army. The history from verse 5 to 13 is the same as that recorded by St. Luke (ch. vii. 1—10); who mentions the additional circumstance, that the centurion sent a deputation to our Lord, and that the message which he had prepared was delivered by his friends.

READER. *Great multitudes followed him.*—All ought to follow him; for "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Of the multitudes who followed Christ, how few were faithful and true disciples! The multitude cried out, Crucify him!

Then came a leper and worshipped him.—Thus let us come to Christ with deep humility and reverence.

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst.—A persuasion of Christ's power lies at the foundation of faith. Meditation on the various manifestations of the Saviour's omnipotence may therefore become one means of strengthening

our faith. *If thou wilt.*—Believers may rest satisfied that God *can* confer temporal good things upon them, and that he *will* do so, if the grant, faithfully and humbly desired, be consistent with his wisdom and goodness; but this they must leave with Him. As to spiritual blessings, we know that there are none too great to be vouchsafed to those who truly believe in Christ. But these, also, let us remember, are bestowed because God wills the gift; they are the effects of free, unmerited favour. *Thou canst.*—Yes; thy merits, O blessed Jesus, are sufficient to atone for every transgression, and to purchase everything good and needful for our souls; thy grace is able to subdue every corruption, and to fill us with all the fulness of God. Thou canst make me clean. Thou canst heal the disease of sin, and deliver from its disgrace, and its wretched consequences.

I will.—How plainly the Deity of Christ appears in this declaration and exercise of sovereign and independent power!

Be thou clean.—This is the word which runs throughout the Gospel, in answer to the application of every faithful soul that seeks to be saved from the leprosy of sin. It is a word full of mercy, and of power. The priest under the law could pronounce men unclean or clean; Jesus Christ can make men clean. In all things he hath the pre-eminence. Rom. viii. 3.

Show thyself to the priest.—Notwithstanding the degeneracy of the priesthood in those days. *And offer the gifts.* One instance, among

many, of honour put by Christ upon the ceremonial law as long as it continued in force. "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

Then came unto him a centurion.—A heathen soldier: but Christ does not regard men's persons—he does not consider who we are, but what we are, when we come to him. This centurion, like Cornelius, was a pious man. The life and occupation of a soldier do not form any real excuse for impiety and unbelief. No man's lawful business or profession, of itself, keeps him at a distance from God.

Beseeching him.—Contrast this with the conduct of Naaman, 2 Kings v. 9—12.

My servant.—Thus should we take an interest in the welfare of all those who are in any way dependent upon us, and subject to our care or influence.

I am not worthy.—Such was his humility. And his humility had not been impaired by the gracious promises which he had received. The condescension of Jesus seemed to make him even more humble: and such will be the effect of divine favour bestowed upon ourselves, if rightly understood and received.

But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.—Such was his faith. Humility and faith are kindred graces, and often appear in company with each other. Perhaps this centurion's faith was stronger and more simple than that of some other persons, who made a great effort in order to introduce a paraly-

tic into our Saviour's presence, by uncovering the roof of the house where he was. But true faith, although it exists in various degrees, and shows itself under various aspects, is always accepted and approved.

I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me.—How cheering to reflect, that the mightiest agents in nature, and the most important events that can happen to us, obey the word of God our Saviour as promptly, and as certainly, as soldiers in a well-disciplined army obey the commands of their general. Nay, more so; for this is, after all, to compare great things with small. God is indeed the Lord of Hosts, and all things serve him.

Go—Come—Do this; he goeth, he cometh, he doeth it.—Thus may we have grace to serve the Lord Christ, hearkening to his word, and obeying his commands.

He marvelled.—He expressed great admiration and approbation of this man's faith. Let men of humility and faith be honourable in our eyes also.

I have not found so great faith.—Christ seeks faith, and the fruits of faith.

No, not in Israel.—Men who possess few privileges and slender advantages, sometimes stand higher in God's favour than those who have more abundant means of knowing and obeying his will. This consideration should tend to keep Christians humble,—should excite them to diligence and holy emulation.

Many shall come from the east and

s 2

west.—How delightful the thought and prospect of this great multitude! Heb. ii. 10; Jude xiv; Rev. xxi. 24; Mal. i. 11; Matt. xxiv. 31.

Shall sit down—at the banquet of divine love and heavenly happiness—with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; the society of glorified saints will form one part of eternal felicity.

Children of the kingdom—cast out.—Awful result of a neglect and abuse of religious privileges! As professing Christians, we are now children of the kingdom; but, if we would not be cast out of heaven, our principles and practice must, through divine grace, agree with our profession.

As thou hast believed.—The measure of many blessings will be according to the measure of our faith. Lord, increase it!

As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.—Here we see the power of faith, and the power of Christ. We are saved by faith, but it is Christ that saves.

His servant was healed the selfsame hour.—Faith obtains present mercy. Do we believe aright in the Son of God? Then even now we are saved by him. Does our faith increase? Then its attendant blessings are augmented at the same time.

HYMN.

Look back, my soul, with grateful love,
On what thy God has done;
Praise him for his unnumber'd gifts,
And praise him for his Son.

My soul from everlasting death
Is by his mercy brought,
To tell in Zion's sacred gates
The wonders he hath wrought.

Still will I walk before his face
While he this life prolongs;
Till grace shall all its work complete,
And teach me heavenly songs.

DODDRIDGE.

§ XXIX.

CHAP. VIII. 14—22.

Christ healeth Peter's mother-in-law, and many other diseased; and showeth how he is to be followed.

14 ¶^a And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw 'his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 ¶^a When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, *Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

18 ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

19 ° And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

132

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21 ^a And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, ^asuffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

^a Mark i. 29, 30, 31. Luke iv. 38, 39. 11 Cor. ix. 5. —^m Mark i. 32, &c. Luke iv. 40, 41. —ⁿ Is. liii. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 24. —^o Luke ix. 57, 58. —^p Luke ix. 59, 60. ^q See 1 Kin. xix. 20.

Reader. You may remember that the words of Isaiah, quoted in verse 17, are rendered, in our version of the Old Testament, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." The expression is true in both senses. The Lord Jesus healed bodily diseases as a type and a pledge of his still greater exercise of mercy and power in taking away the guilt, and subduing the power, of sin.

READER. *Peter's wife's mother.*—St. Peter, therefore, had entered into the holy and honourable estate of matrimony. It is not Christ, but vain tradition, or usurped ecclesiastical authority, which represents the single state of life as one of peculiar virtue, and enjoins it on the ministers of the Gospel.

The fever left her.—Thus may the word of Christ put to flight every inordinate desire, every unhealthy affection, of our hearts and minds!

She arose, and ministered unto them.—A plain proof of her recovery. When we have received the gifts of God, and especially the blessings of salvation, we must diligently serve our brethren.

He healed all that were sick.—Let none despair of a remedy for their spiritual diseases when they apply to the true Physician of the soul. He heals all that faithfully seek his grace.

Himself took our sicknesses, and bare our infirmities.—Our blessed Lord not only takes away the sins of those who believe on him, having himself endured the punishment which they deserved, but he also removes, in his own way, and at the proper time, those bodily infirmities which form part of the consequence and punishment of sin. He will swallow up even death in victory. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Master, I will follow thee.—The Scribe's profession was voluntary and zealous; and his promise of devotion to the person of Christ was free and unreserved. But it is to be feared that his motives were low, selfish, and worldly; and that he was not prepared to follow Jesus in the way of humility and self-denial. Our Lord knew his heart, and framed his answer accordingly. It is vain to profess to follow Christ if our hearts are set upon the world, and we seek to make religion subservient to carnal ends.

Let me first go and bury my father.—Here is the case of a lukewarm disciple lingering in the path of holy obedience.

Let the dead, i.e., the spiritually dead, those who are not alive to God, and therefore unfit for his service, *bury their dead.* The common offices of humanity, and many social acts, may be decently performed by those who act upon merely human motives, and care for no more than the approbation of their fellow-men. Our sense of duty to God must be paramount. Worldly engagements must not be urged as an excuse for the neglect of religious services. Such excuses are among the marks of a backward and unwilling mind.

HYMN.

O Lord, whate'er is felt or fear'd,
This thought is our repose,
That He by whom this frame was rear'd,
Its various weakness knows.

Thou view'st us with a pitying eye,
While struggling with our load;
In pains and dangers thou art nigh,
Our Father and our God!

Supported by our Saviour's love,
We tend to realms of peace,
Where every pain shall far remove
And every frailty cease.

§ XXX.

CHAP. VIII. 23—34.

Christ stilleth the tempest on the sea; driveth the devils out of two men possessed, and suffereth them to go into the swine.

23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 ¶ And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inso-

much that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then *he* arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

28 ¶ And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole

herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

† Mark iv. 37, &c. Luke viii. 23, &c.—‡ Ps. lxxv. 7; & lxxxix. 9; & cvii. 29.—§ Mark v. 1, &c. Luke viii. 26, &c.—¶ See Deut. v. 25. † Kin. xvii. 16. Luke v. & Acts xvi. 39.

Reader.—The country of the Gergesenes, mentioned in verse 28, is the same as the country of the Gadarenes in Mark v. 1.—St. Mark (v. 2) and St. Luke (viii. 27), in relating this history, speak of only one man as suffering under the affliction described; whence we may infer that, of the two who were healed, one attracted especial notice. And we may observe, that the circumstantial variety which exists in the narratives of the Evangelists concerning the same facts and events, is one indication, among many, of their honesty as historians, and the credibility of their record.—The tombs in Judea were usually caves in rocks, or in the sides of hills.

READER. *There arose a great tempest in the sea.*—We must expect storms even though Christ be with us. But Christ within is more than

a protection against trouble and danger from without.

He was asleep; his human nature, entirely like our own, being subject to fatigue, and needing repose and refreshment.—By sleeping at this time, he intended, perhaps, to try the faith and patience of his disciples. “He that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep.”

Lord, save us; we perish.—Well may a sense of danger convince us of our weakness, direct us to the Saviour, and excite earnestness in prayer, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?—There may be true faith where there is not great faith. But unbelief, or defect of faith, exposes men to fear, anxiety, and sorrow—reflects dishonour upon Christ—and meets with his rebuke. Our Lord did not refuse to answer the prayer of his disciples, even while he blamed their infirmities and fears.

There was a great calm.—A striking proof and display of divine power! See Ps. xlvi. 1—3; lxxv. 1; cvii. 23—31. How complete is the work of Christ! When he speaks peace to the soul, how great is that peace; and “When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?” Job xxxiv. 29.

What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him.—How powerful a friend, how terrible a foe! “The Lord sitteth above the waterfloods; he remaineth a King for ever.” What manner of men must we be, if we refuse to obey him; if our rebellious wills re-

fuse that submission which was yielded by the furious tempest, and the raging sea!

Two possessed of devils—exceeding fierce.—It is one sad effect of Satan’s influence on the minds of men, that it makes them hostile and cruel towards each other.

Jesus, thou Son of God.—“The devils believe and tremble.” In this case they recognised the person, and acknowledged the power, of the eternal Son of God; but yet they retained their enmity. It has been well said, that it is not knowledge, but love, that distinguishes men from devils.

What have we to do with thee?—How sad to know Jesus to be the Son of God, but that we have nothing to do with him in the way of comfort and salvation!—Evil spirits and wicked men would gladly have nothing to do with Christ. But this cannot be. They must hereafter submit to his power, although they will not have him to reign over them by their own choice.

To torment us before the time.—See 2 Pet. ii. 4. Is it one part of the torment of an evil spirit to be restrained from doing mischief to mankind? Let it be our delight to do good.

Suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.—Evil spirits cannot enter even into a brute creature without the permission of God. How little harm, then, can they do to us if we are, by faith, the children of our heavenly Father!—Let us thankfully reflect upon God’s restraining power, as preserving us from outward evils;

ST. MATTHEW IX. 1—13.

and seek for his restraining grace to keep us safe from sin.

He said unto them, Go.—As God, Christ has a right to dispose of men's property according to his sovereign will. Ps. l. 10—12. Perhaps the loss of the swine was a punishment inflicted on the owners for keeping an animal which it was unlawful for Jews to eat, and was, by its very presence, an abomination and offence.—God, in Christ, holds evil spirits in a chain; but sometimes, for wise and good purposes, he permits them to exert their power to a certain extent. But we may always pray, with faith and confidence, “Deliver us from evil.”

The whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.—Apt emblem of the ruin of ungodly men! There are they “drowned in destruction and perdition.” And such is “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

They besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.—Alas, how many are willing to lose their souls rather than their worldly profits!—How many put Christ away from them, fearing lest his presence should hinder the enjoyment of some worldly comfort, or knowing it to be inconsistent with the indulgence of some favourite sin!—And some deluded men are ready to quarrel with their Deliverer and his heavenly religion, instead of renouncing Satan, avoiding sin, and securing themselves from danger.

The Lord Jesus complied with the request of these mistaken people.

If we thrust away Christ from us, he will depart. See Prov. i. 24—33; Acts xiii. 46; Eph. iv. 30.

HYMN.

Affliction is a stormy deep,
Where wave succeeds to wave;
Though o'er my head the billows roll
I know the Lord can save.

The hand that now withholds my joys
Can yet restore my peace;
And he who bids the tempest roar
Can bid the tempest cease.

In the dark watches of the night
I'll count his mercies o'er;
I'll praise him for ten thousand part,
And humbly beg for more.

COTTON.

§ XXXI.

CHAP. IX. 1—13.

Christ curing one sick of the palsy, calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom, and eateth with publicans and sinners.

AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

ST. MATTHEW IX. 1—13.

5 For whether is easier, to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and walk*?

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) *Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.*

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

9 ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, *Follow me.* And he arose, and followed him.

10 ¶ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, *Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*

12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, *They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*

13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*: for I am not

come to call the righteous, ^abut sinners to repentance.

a ch. iv. 13.—^b Mark ii. 3. Luke v. 18. c ch. viii. 10.—^d Ps. cxxxix. 3. ch. xii. 25. Mark xii. 15. Luke v. 22, & vi. 8, & ix. 47, & xi. 17.—^e Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27.—^f Mark ii. 16, &c. Luke v. 29, &c.—^g ch. xi. 19. Luke v. 30, & xv. 2. & Gal. ii. 15.—^h Hos. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8. ch. xii. 7. & 1 Tim. i. 15.

Reader. In explanation of this passage, I have only to remark that *Matthew* in v. 9 is the same as *Levi*, Luke v. 27, probably the writer of this Gospel. The name signifies The gift of God.—He was sitting at the receipt of custom, i. e. in the tax-gatherer's office, the place where the Roman imposts were paid.—*Publicans* (v. 11) denote Roman tax-gatherers, who were usually persons of bad character, and extortionate.

READER. Our Lord *passed over* from the place where he had been so rudely treated, *and came into his own city*, i. e. Capernaum. He forsakes those who reject him, and visits those who are willing to entertain him.

Seeing their faith.—It was humble, firm, and active. They took great pains in order to introduce this poor man to Jesus; See Luke v. 18, 19: teaching us not to be discouraged by difficulties.

Son. See Heb. xii. 5.—*Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*—The assurance of pardon may impart peace and joy, even though outward affliction should continue. And if earthly comfort is restored, the sense of God's favour will greatly enhance the blessing.—Sin is the cause of suffering. When sin is forgiven, all suffering ceases, or is turned into a benefit. See Ps. ciii. 1—3. -

This man blasphemeth.—Even the sight of a miracle is not enough to work faith in the heart. Ungodly men may resist the Holy Ghost, by whose power alone they can believe. —*Certain of the Scribes*—men learned in the law,—*said this within themselves.* A mere acquaintance with the letter of God's word does not secure us from false practical conclusions, and erroneous views. We must have humble and holy hearts; or else all our knowledge is vain.

Jesus, knowing their thoughts.—Who is this that forgives sins, and looks into the hearts of men, but God himself? Jesus knows our thoughts, Heb. iv. 12, 13.—O Lord, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit! Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Whether is easier?—Both equally impossible with man, equally possible with God.

That ye may know.—The power of Christ in the kingdom of nature is a proof of his power in the kingdom of grace; for there is but one God.—Besides this, his power to remove that which is a punishment of sin, indicates his power to remove sin itself.

Power—to forgive sins.—See John v. 22, 27; xvii. 2.—*On earth*—Much more so now; Acts v. 31.

He arose and departed.—They whose sins have been forgiven must walk in the way of God's commandments. Such is the proof and demonstration of their spiritual recovery. Thus men may know it.

They marvelled, and glorified God.—Let us thankfully regard benefits

conferred upon other men as so many displays of the divine goodness and glory.

At the receipt of custom.—Engaged in the work of his calling.

Follow me.—Christ is first with his gracious invitations and commands. See Rom. x. 20.

He arose and followed him.—The call was obeyed. How prompt and blessed this obedience! How great the power of divine grace!

As Jesus sat at meat in the house, viz. of Matthew, — who modestly omits to tell us, what the other Evangelists record, that he made a great feast for our Saviour and his disciples. See Prov. xxvii. 2.

Why eateth, &c.—See Isa. lrv. 5.—A bad interpretation of a good action. Let us expect reproach, and bear it patiently, even when we do well.—See Heb. xii. 3.

They that are sick.—Sin is the great malady of the soul; “deforming, weakening, disquieting, wasting, killing, but, thank God, not incurable.”—Christ is the good physician. All men need his presence and aid, because they are afflicted with spiritual sickness unto death. But they who are ignorant of their malady, are careless of the remedy.

Go and learn.—We must ascertain not only the letter of Scripture, but its meaning; and, above all, its practical bearing on our circumstances and conduct.

I will have mercy, and not (i.e. rather than) *sacrifice.*—Moral duties are of higher obligation than ritual observances, even when the latter are commanded by divine authority.

How much more must they be preferred to the vain traditions of antiquity! 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.—Sacrifices were a type of God's mercy in Christ. They were a shadow of good things to come. See Ps. xl. 6.

I am not come to call the righteous,—if all men had been righteous, Christ would not have come; and to as many as think themselves righteous, he will have come in vain;—*but sinners to repentance,*—to beseech, persuade, and enable them to change their mind, and to turn from sin to holiness and God.

HYMN.

Before thy mercy-seat, O Lord,
Behold thy servants stand,
To ask the knowledge of thy word,
The guidance of thy hand.

Let thy eternal truths, we pray,
Dwell richly in each heart;
That from the safe and narrow way
We never may depart.

Lord, from thy word remove the seal,
Unfold its hidden store;
And teach us, as we read, to feel
Its value more and more.

BATHURST.

§ XXXII.

CHAP. IX. 14—26.

Christ defendeth his disciples for not fasting; cureth the bloody issue; and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.

14 ¶ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?'

15 And Jesus said unto them,

Can "the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and "then shall they fast,

16 No man putteth a piece || of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

18 ¶ ° While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

20 ¶ ° And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good com-

fort; 'thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 'And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw 'the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, 'Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26 And || the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

l Mark ii. 18, &c. Luke v. 33, &c.; & xviii. 12.—
m John iii. 29. n Acts xiii. 2, 3; & xiv. 23. 1 Cor. vii.
5.—|| Or, raw, or unwrought cloth.—o Mark v. 23, &c.
Luke viii. 41, &c.—p Mark v. 25. Luke viii. 43.—q Luke
vii. 50; & viii. 48; & xvii. 19; & xviii. 42.—r Mark
v. 38. Luke viii. 51. s See 2 Chr. xxxv. 25.—t Acts
xx. 10.—|| Or, this fame.

Reader. These verses give but little work to the critics. I need only remind you, that the reference in v. 17 is to bottles made of skin or leather, still common in Eastern countries. The "minstrels" in v. 25 were hired musicians, according to a heathen custom.

READER. *Why do we, &c.*—It is a common error to regard ourselves and our performances as a kind of rule or standard for other men. It is sad that religious observances should be made an occasion of debate, and even of strife and envying! See Isa. lviii. 4.—Let us neither

boast of our own acts of piety, nor sneer at the supposed defects of others.

Jesus said unto them.—He gave two reasons against the use of a painful or grievous discipline. It was not suited to the circumstances of his disciples at the time; and it was more than their strength would bear. Christ is ever ready to defend his people against all accusers; even against the great adversary.

Can the children of the bridechamber mourn.—Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church; and true Christians can rejoice on account of his presence in the midst of them by his word and his Spirit. Christ in the heart is the author of its joy; Christ in the Church, and in heaven itself, is the fountain of its glory.

Then shall they fast.—The disciples were not exposed to any persecution during our Saviour's ministry; but afterwards they endured great sufferings.—It was a custom in the early Church to observe an annual fast of forty hours,—the space of time during which the body of Jesus lay in the grave.—See Psalm xlii.

No man putteth, &c.—Some believers are not able to fulfil the harder duties and more severe exercises which religion may sometimes demand; nor should such burdens be harshly imposed upon them. They should be gently treated, in order to their profit. (See Rom. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12.)

A certain ruler,—governor of one of the synagogues, Jairus, Mark v. 22.—An example of faith and earnest supplication.

If I may but touch his garment.—See John i. 16.—Great faith on the part of the applicant; great mercy and condescension on the part of Christ.

Be of good comfort.—"Comfort ye my people, saith the Lord." Christ can command and create comfort for the troubled soul.—Do we desire temporal mercy or relief? Let us seek it in faith,—with a regard to God's promises, in submission to his will, with a desire for his glory.

When he saw her.—Christ looks with an eye of compassion and love on many that retire humbly and modestly from the sight of men.

Give place.—Let our mourning for the death of relatives and friends give place to the word and promise of Christ. In this case, the death of the maid was the same thing, in effect, as if she had been asleep. Death is but as a sleep to all who are in Christ Jesus. Isa. lvii. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 18.

They laughed him to scorn.—Men often deride truth which they do not comprehend, and are unwilling to believe. Sneers at religion are dreadful indications of a depraved heart.—By thus manifesting their conviction that death had taken place, they became (unintentionally) witnesses of the reality of the miracle. "The wrath of man shall praise thee."

When the people were put forth,—perhaps because they were in an evil state of mind,—*he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.*—So, likewise, in a spiritual sense, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."—Lord, take us

by the hand, and cause us continually to arise from the death of sin!

HYMN.

Faith is a precious grace,
Where'er it is bestow'd;
It boasts of a celestial birth,
And is the gift of God.

To Christ it leads the soul
When fill'd with deep distress;
Flies to the fountain of his blood,
And trusts his righteousness.

BEDDOME.

§ XXXIII.

CHAP. IX. 27—38.

Christ giveth sight to two blind men; healeth a dumb man possessed of a devil; and hath compassion on the multitude.

27 ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, "Thou son of David, have mercy on us."

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, "See that no man know it."

31 "But they, when they

were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 ¶^a As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, 'He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

35 ^b And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, ^c teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 ¶^d But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they ^e fainted, and were scattered abroad, ^f as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

38 ^g Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

^a ch. xv. 22, & xx. 30, 31. Mark x. 47, 48. Luke xviii. 38, 39.—^b ch. viii. 4, & xii. 16, & xvii. 9. Luke v. 14.—^c Mark vii. 36.—^d See ch. xii. 22. Luke xi. 14.—^e ch. xii. 24. Mark iii. 22. Luke xi. 16.—^f Mark vi. 6. Luke xiii. 22. ^g ch. iv. 23.—^h Mark vi. 34. ¶ Or, were tired and lay down. ⁱ Num. xxvii. 17. 1 Kin. xxii. 17. Ezek. xxxiv. 5. Zech. x. 2.—^j Luke x. 2. John iv. 35.—^k 2 Thes. iii. 1.

READER. We may proceed at once to our practical reflections on this portion of the sacred narrative.

Two blind men followed him, crying.—They followed him with their entreaties. We must not only pray, but be importunate in prayer.

Thou Son of David.—A confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah.—Spiritual sight, notwithstanding natural blindness.

Believest thou that I am able to do this?—Christ demands not only an acknowledgment of his power and office, but also a persuasion of his power, and his ability to save.—*Able to do this.*—We must believe in the power of Christ with reference to our particular need; must be persuaded of it, trust in it,—and hope for its exercise.

According to your faith be it unto you.—If we do not believe, we cannot find favour with God;—but we shall find it, and enjoy the sense of it, in proportion to our faith.—See Ps. xxxi. 19.

As they went out.—As soon as some went, others came. When one kind of disease was cured, another presented itself. How many also are the spiritual wants of men! How many men have need of mercy! How unwearied is the Redeemer in doing good!

A dumb man possessed with a devil.—The effects of Satanic possession sometimes assumed the appearance of natural diseases.—A man who neither confesses his sins to God, nor offers up prayer or praise, is well represented by the dumb man.

When the devil was cast out the dumb

ST. MATTHEW X. 1—15.

spake.—When the cause and source of sin is removed, the symptoms of sin disappear.—See Isaiah, xxxv. 5, 6.

The multitudes marvelled—But the Pharisees said.—The works of Christ excite in some men wonder, in others opposition, in how few faith!

He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.—What an effect of jealousy and malice! What inconsistency and absurdity in the supposition! What impiety in the assertion! But see 2 Tim. iii. 10.

He was moved with compassion on them.—Such is the compassion of the Redeemer for men's souls, destitute of spiritual strength and vigour, erring and straying from the ways of peace.—The soul faints without the bread of life, and wanders in error and darkness without the appointed lamp of light.

The harvest plenteous.—Many souls to be saved; and many mercies in store for these many souls.—*The labourers few.* Too little sense of the value of the harvest; too great a disposition to idle self-indulgence.—The work of the ministry is laborious, but it is necessary, and delightful, bringing its own reward. It is the prerogative of God to send; it is our duty to pray, and to act accordingly.

PSALM XIX.

Behold, the morning sun
Begins his glorious way;
His beams through every region run,
And light and life convey.

But where the gospel comes
It spreads diviner light;
It calls dead sinners from their tombs,
And gives the blind their sight.

We hear thy word of love
And fain would we obey;
Lord, send thy Spirit from above
To guide us in thy way.

WATTS.

§ XXXIV.

CHAP. X. 1—15.

Christ sendeth out his twelve Apostles.

AND ^awhen he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power || *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, ^bwho is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alphæus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddæus;

4 ^cSimon the Canaanite, and Judas ^dIscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, ^eGo not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of ^fthe Samaritans enter ye not:

6 ^gBut go rather to the ^hlost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 ⁱAnd as ye go, preach, say-

ing, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: 'freely ye have received, freely give.

9 *|| Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor *brass in your purses,

10 Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet †staves: °for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 °And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

13 °And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: 'but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 'And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, 'shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, *It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

a Mark iii. 13, 14; & vi. 7. Luke vi. 13; & ix. 1. | Or, over.—b John i. 42.—c Luke vi. 15. Acts i. 13. d John xiii. 26.—e ch. iv. 15. f See 2 Kin. xvii. 24. John iv. 9, 20.—g ch. xv. 24. Acts xiii. 46. h Is. llii. 6. Jer. i. 6, 17. Ezek. xxxiv. 5, 6, 16. 1 Pet. ii. 25.—i Luke ix. 2. & ch. lli. 2; & iv. 17. Luke x. 9.—j Acts viii. 18, 20.—m 1 Sam. ix. 7. Mark vi. 8. Luke ix. 3; & x. 4; & xxii. 35. | Or, Get. n See Mark vi. 8.—o Gr. a *staff*. o Luke x. 7. 1 Cor. ix. 7, &c. 1 Tim. v. 18.—p Luke x. 8.—q Luke x. 5. r Ps. xxxv. 13.—s Mark vi. 11. Luke ix. 5; & x. 10, 11. t Neh. v. 13. Acts xiii. 51; & xviii. 4.—u ch. xi. 23, 24.

Reader. Concerning the names of the Apostles, recited in vv. 2—4, I need only remark that Bartholomew is probably the same as Nathanael, John i. 46,—Lebbæus, surnamed Thaddæus, is Judas or Jude, the brother of James,—and Simon the Canaanite is otherwise called Simon Zelotes, Luke vi. 15.

The Samaritans (v. 5) were the descendants of a people who had been sent to Samaria by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria. Their religion was a mixture of Judaism and heathenism; they professed to receive the Pentateuch as of divine authority, and they had a temple on Mount Gerizim. They were regarded with peculiar jealousy and hatred by the Jews.

The scrip mentioned in v. 10 was a leathern bag or pouch for carrying provisions.

READER. *He gave them power, &c.*—Truly this was the Son of God!—This power was a confirmation of their doctrine; and an emblem of the effects to be produced by the faithful preaching of the Gospel, with the influence of the Holy Spirit.—*All manner of sickness.* In the Gospel and the grace of God we find a remedy for spiritual maladies of every kind.

The twelve Apostles.—Chosen from among the disciples (See 2 Tim. ii. 2); commissioned and sent to preach the Gospel, and to lay the foundation of the Christian church. They were eye-witnesses of the facts which they proclaimed, and were endowed with

ST. MATTHEW X. 1—15.

the power of exercising and imparting miraculous gifts; and in these respects were different from all Christian ministers who had succeeded them.—They corresponded in number to the twelve patriarchs and tribes of Israel; see Luke xxii. 30; Rev. xii. 1; xxix. 12—14. St. Paul was afterwards added to their company.

And Judas Iscariot.—Tares among the wheat, and even wolves among the sheep. See John vi. 70; 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Lost sheep of the house of Israel.—Who belonged, by covenant, to a sacred fold, but, in heart and practice, had reeled and strayed into regions of sin and error! See Jer. ii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 25.—Salvation was proclaimed to the Jews first. How plainly do the mercy and long-suffering of God in Christ appear in this feature of the Gospel dispensation!

Heal the sick, &c.—Miracles were divine seals to the authority of the Apostles. Spiritual cures and life are the signs that perpetually follow the faithful ministration of the Gospel, even unto the end of the world.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand.—See Commentary on ch. iii. 2.

Freely ye have received, freely give.—See Acts viii. 18.—Let us all thankfully remember what things have been freely given to us by God;—and let the divine mercy and bounty be the pattern of our kindness and liberality to others, in things spiritual and temporal.

Nor scrip for your journey, &c.—No needless encumbrances.

The workman is worthy of his meat.—This points out the duty of Christians respecting the maintenance of their ministers; and it implies a pledge on the part of Christ that they who honestly and faithfully labour in the ministration of the Gospel shall not be left destitute of temporal provision.—It may be regarded also as a warning against covetousness.—See 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. A faithful minister of the Gospel has therefore a divine right to receive his maintenance from the church in which he serves.

Enquire who in it is worthy.—Ministers must search out, and encourage, the well-disposed, as well as endeavour to reclaim the evil.—They should choose religious persons for their friends and companions.—*Worthy.* Not that any can deserve Gospel blessings, in the way of merit; but some, more than others, are disposed and fitted to receive them,—some are ready to accept them while others would refuse them.

Salute it.—Courtesy well becomes Christians, and especially Christian ministers.—The salutation was Peace be unto this house! Peace from God includes every needful blessing.

If it be not worthy.—Even the Apostles, with all their care and inquiry, were liable to mistake or to be misinformed, concerning men's characters. Let not Christian ministers, or others, be too much discouraged when they find that their confidence has been misplaced.

Let your peace return to you.—A blessing pronounced upon unworthy persons is of no effect.—Let us be-

ST. MATTHEW X. 16—31.

ware of the forfeiture and loss of religious privileges.

Whoever shall not receive you.—The Gospel is too often thanklessly rejected, even where it is faithfully preached.

Shake off the dust of your feet.—A solemn intimation that the despisers of the Gospel will themselves be cast off with abhorrence.

It shall be more tolerable.—It is indeed a fearful thing to sin against the light, the means, and the mercies which, as Christians, we enjoy. How great the loss, how deep the condemnation, which must follow! From hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, good Lord, deliver us!

HYMN,

Glory to God who gave the word,
And bade the nations hear;
Who caus'd his will to be proclaim'd,
And brought salvation near.

Oh, may thy word direct our path,
And guide our faltering feet;
Direct us in the living way,
And to thy mercy-seat!

§ XXXV.

CHAP. X. 16—31.

16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

146

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house †Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known.

27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear that preach ye upon the housetops.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

2 Luke x. 3. 9 Rom. xvi. 19. Eph. v. 15. 21 Cor. xiv. 20. Phil. ii. 15. 1 Or, simple.—2 ch. xxiv. 9. Mark xiii. 9. Luke xii. 11; & xxi. 12. 3 Acts v. 40.—4 Acts xii. 1; & xxiv. 10; & xxv. 7, 23. 5 2 Tim. iv. 16.—6 Mark xiii. 11, 12, 13. Luke xii. 11; & xxi. 14, 15.—7 Ex. iv. 12. Jer. i. 7.—8 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. Acts iv. 8; & vi. 10. 9 2 Tim. iv. 17.—10 Mic. vii. 6; ver. 35, 36. Luke xxi. 16.—11 Luke xxi. 17. 12 Dan. xii. 19, 13. ch. xiv. 13. Mark xiii. 13.—13 ch. ii. 13; & iv. 12; & xii. 13. Acts. viii. 1; & ix. 25; & xiv. 16. 14 Or, end, or finish. 15 ch. xvi. 28.—16 Luke vi. 40. John xiii. 16; & xv. 26.—17 ch. xii. 34. Mark iii. 22. Luke xi. 15. John viii. 48, 52. 18 Or, Beelzebub.—19 Mark iv. 22. Luke viii. 17; & xii. 2, 3.—20 Is. viii. 12, 13. Luke xii. 1. 21 Pet. iii. 14.—22 It is in value halfpenny farthing in the original, as being the tenth part of the Roman penny: see on ch. xviii. 28.—23 1 Sam. xiv. 45. 2 Sam. xiv. 11. Luke xxi. 13. Acts xxvii. 34.

Reader. Beelzebub, or Beelzebul, (Fly-god), was the name of an idol worshipped at Ekron, 2 Kings i. 2. The Jews applied it to the prince or chief of evil spirits, Luke xi. 15; Mark iii. 22.

The farthing mentioned in v. 29,
u 2

is the tenth part of a Roman Denarius; it was equal in value to about three farthings of our money. The word was proverbially used to denote a very small sum.

READER. Sheep in the midst of wolves. Such was their danger; but, I send you forth,—this was their comfort.

Wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.—Prudent and cautious, as respects your own safety; but harmless and inoffensive to other men.—Most lovely and blessed, and in effect most powerful and triumphant, is this prescribed union of prudence and simplicity. It is the Lord who teacheth man this knowledge.

They will deliver you up to the councils, &c.—Religious persecution has often called in the aid of the civil power. The disgrace of a formal condemnation by constituted authorities, forms part of the sufferings to which many of Christ's faithful servants have been exposed. But their Master endured the same grief before them.

They will scourge you.—See 2 Cor. xi. 24; and compare John xvi. 2; Isa. lxvi. 5; Zec. xi. 4, 5.

Take no thought.—Be not anxiously careful in seeking for words or arguments with which to defend your cause. Be ready with a willing and honest mind to testify what you know; and trust in God to support you.

The brother shall deliver up, &c.—How lamentable are the proofs of human depravity,—how sad the effects of pride, self-will, and self-con-

ceit,—as displayed in religious intolerance and bigotry!

Hated of all men for my name's sake.—See John xv. 25; 1 Cor. iv. 13.—Why so? Because men of unconverted hearts hate godliness and Christ.

He that endureth unto the end shall be saved.—The prospect of the end may well alleviate the sufferings of the way. This precept concerns us all. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” See Jude xxiv. 25.

When they persecute you in this city flee ye into another.—It is right and prudent to avoid persecution by flight, when such a precaution becomes necessary in consequence of the active hostility of wicked men.—Christ's soldiers, says one, may quit their ground, but they must not quit their colours.

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.—Jesus Christ is our great Teacher, and our honoured Lord. Let us learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart. By his grace, in following the example of his great humility, we shall possess our souls in patience.

How much more shall they call them of his household?—The use of opprobrious names and epithets is another feature of religious persecution, even to this day.

There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed.—God is our witness; his eye is continually upon us; and he rewardeth every man according to his work. See Eccl. xii. 14; Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5.

What ye hear in the ear.—Ministers are to preach publicly that which they hear from Christ, by studying his word with private meditation and prayer.

Fear not them.—See Rom. viii. 35—37.

Rather fear Him.—The right fear of God is the true antidote against the wrong fear of man. Isa. li. 12, 13.

Able to destroy.—See Rom. ix. 22; 2 Thess. i. 9.

One of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father, i. e. without the knowledge and permission of God. How watchful is divine Providence! How does its care extend to objects apparently most minute and insignificant!

The very hairs of your head are all numbered.—Such is the special or particular providence of God in favour of all his faithful people. See Rom. v. 1—5.

Ye are all of more value than many sparrows.—How gracious is this word of Christ! How amply was it confirmed by the shedding of his most precious blood!

HYMN.

Lord, who hast suffer'd all for me,
My grace and pardon to procure,
The lighter cross I bear for Thee,
Help me with patience to endure.

Let me not angrily declare
No pain was ever sharp as mine;
Nor murmur at the cross I bear;
But rather weep, remembering thine!

COWPER

§ XXXVI.

CHAP. X. 32—42.

32 'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, 'him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 'But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

34 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance 'against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

36 And 'a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 'And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 'He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

40 ¶ 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41 'He that receiveth a pro-

phet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

r Luke xii. 8. Rom. x. 9, 10. s Rev. iii. 5.—d Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26. f Tim. ii. 12.—a Luke xii. 49, 51, 52, 53.—g Mic. vii. 6.—y Ps. xli. 9; & lv. 18. Mic. vii. 6. John xiii. 18.—s Luke xiv. 26.—a ch. xvi. 24. Mark viii. 34. Luke ix. 23; & xiv. 27.—b ch. xvi. 25. Luke xvii. 33. John xii. 25.—c ch. xviii. 5. Luke ix. 48; & x. 16. John xii. 44; & xiii. 20. Gal. iv. 14.—d i Kin. xvii. 10; & xviii. 4. 2 Kin. iv. 8.—e ch. viii. 5, 6; & xxv. 40. Mark ix. 41. Heb. vi. 10

READER. Whosoever shall confess me before men,—shall bear my name, manifest obedience to my commandments, and adhere to my cause—*him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven,*—I will own him as a friend and brother, I will claim him as one of my ransomed people!

But whosoever shall deny me before men,—in word or work (see Titus i. 16)—*him will I also deny.* If Christ denies us, who will claim us? How awful,—how irrecoverably ruinous—to be disclaimed by Christ,—to be left, in the day of judgment, without part or lot in his great salvation!—The religion of the heart must appear in the life; or else it is not what Christ requires. See Rom. x. 10. Unwillingness to profess the truth is a sign that we do not rightly believe it.

I came not to send peace, but a sword.—Such was the effect of our Saviour's coming, in consequence of the wickedness and perverseness of man. Mercies abused draw after them corresponding judgments.—If our Lord referred to the design of his coming, his meaning probably was that he did not come to send temporal prosperity to the Jews by working a deliverance from the Roman yoke, but rather to be the means of manifesting their final impenitence, and to be the signal of their national destruction.

A man's foes shall be they of his own household.—What a proof of the total and irreconcilable variance which subsists between Christ and the world!—It was a tradition among the Jews that family dissensions should be carried to this extreme height in the age of the Messiah.—How literally was this fulfilled during the siege of Jerusalem!

Is not worthy of me.—Christ must be supreme in our affections; else we do not honour him as God.

He that findeth his life, &c.—He who supremely loves, desires, and preserves the things of this life will lose the happiness of that which is to come: but he who prefers the service of Christ to all temporal considerations, will receive that eternal life which he bestows upon his faithful people.

A prophet in the name of a prophet;—i.e. a Christian minister and teacher in his sacred character and capacity, and with regard to his office.—The Lord knows that hatred to the ministers of the Gospel as

such, is a consequence and an indication of want of love to their message and its author. And a sincere attachment to Christ and his cause is accompanied with proper respect for the Christian ministry.

A cup of cold water only.—Respect is had not to the value of the gift, but to the motives and disposition of the giver.—Love consecrates every gift; and none are holy and acceptable to God without it. See Luke xxi. 3, 4; Heb. vi. 10.—We see here that even the poor may be rich in charity and good works, proceeding from faith in Christ.—The same principle which may prompt the poor to give small things out of their poverty, ought to excite the rich to give largess out of their abundance.

HYMN.

O Lord! I would delight in thee,
And on thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best and only friend.

When all created streams are dried,
Thy fulness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied
And glory in thy name.

No good in creatures can be found,
But may be found in Thee;
I must have all things and abound
If God be God to me.

RYLAND.

§ XXXVII.

CHAP. XI. 1—15.

*John sendeth his disciples to Christ.
Christ's testimony concerning John.*

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he de-

ST. MATTHEW XI. 1—15.

parted thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 *Now when John had heard 'in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, Art thou 'he that should come, or do we look for another ?

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see :

5 'The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and 'the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not 'be offended in me.

7 ¶ 'And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? *A reed shaken with the wind ?

8 But what went ye out for to see ? A man clothed in soft raiment ? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see ? A prophet ? yea, I say unto you, 'and more than a prophet.

10 For this is *he*, of whom it is written, *Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which

shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist : notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 'And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven || suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is *Elias, which was for to come.

15 °He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

a Luke vii. 18, 19, &c. b ch. xiv. 3.—c Gen. xlix. 10. Num. xxiv. 17. Dan. ix. 24. John vi. 14.—d Ia. xxix. 18; & xxxv. 4, 5, 6; & xlii. 7. John ii. 23; & iii. 2; & v. 36; & x. 25, 38; & xiv. 11. e Ps. xxii. 26. Ia. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. Jam. ii. 5.—f Ia. viii. 14, 15. ch. xlii. 6; & xxiv. 10; & xxvi. 31. Rom. ix. 33, 33. 1 Cor. i. 23; & ii. 14. Gal. v. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 8.—g Luke vii. 24. A Eph. iv. 14.—h ch. xiv. 5; & xxi. 26. Luke i. 76; & vii. 26.—i Mal. iii. 1. Mark i. 2. Luke i. 78; & vii. 27. —j Luke xvi. 16. [Or, *is gotten by force, and they that thrust men.*—k Mal. iv. 6.—l Mal. iv. 5. ch. xvii. 12. Luke i. 17.—m ch. xlii. 9. Luke viii. 8. Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29; & iii. 6, 13, 22.

Reader. We cannot suppose that John sent these disciples to Christ for his own satisfaction, unless we fear that his faith had been shaken by the circumstance of his imprisonment, or that he had partaken in the false expectations of the Jews respecting the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, of which no indication had yet been given. It is usually considered that the Baptist sent this message for the sake of his disciples,

ST. MATTHEW XI. 1—15.

in order that they might have an opportunity of witnessing the miracles of Christ, and of being brought to believe in him, instead of continuing to be (as perhaps they were) jealous of his rising reputation.

READER. He departed thence to teach and to preach.—The Lord Jesus did not discontinue his own labours after having assigned employment to his Apostles. He was not weary of going about doing good.

Heard in prison the works of Christ.—Thus St. Paul heard, with joy, of the success of the Gospel while he was in bonds. May the sound of the Gospel reach and cheer us in seasons of affliction or distress!

He sent two of his disciples.—Thus should ministers always send their people to Christ himself.—And thus should all those who know the power and value of the Gospel endeavour to bring all who belong to them to a saving and happy acquaintance with the Saviour.

Art thou he that should come, i. e. the coming,—or, as we should say, the expected,—Messiah?—Let us not omit, as occasion may require, to use the help of serious inquiry, meditation, and prayer, for the strengthening of our faith.

The things that ye do hear and see.—The works of Christ bore witness to his character and office. Let our works, wrought by the imparted power of the Holy Spirit, testify in our favour as Christians.

The poor have the Gospel preached unto them.—See Isa. lxi. 1; Matt. v. 2—12.

Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me,—who shall not stumble at me, shall not refuse to believe in me because I may not be such as he desires, or such as he had expected. Alas, Christ, in his person, his doctrine, or his work, becomes even now a stumbling-block to many, through their own evil hearts, love of sin, and wilful blindness. See Luke ii. 34; 1 Pet. ii. 8.

As they departed,—when they had just left. This commendation of John was not given in the presence of his disciples. It was praise, not flattery; it was truth and justice, not the weakness of blind or excessive admiration.

He began to say unto the multitudes concerning John.—The sum of what our Lord said concerning the Baptist is this:—that he was a man of firm principle and consistent character,—that he led a sober and simple life, without affectation of high things, or display of a worldly mind,—and that he was (as he had announced himself) the forerunner of the Messiah.—Why then did they not believe his testimony, corroborated as it was by our Saviour's personal ministry and work?

What went ye out for to see?—Men will be questioned concerning their real intentions and aims in frequenting places of worship, and using means of grace.

More than a prophet.—Christ is not ashamed of his faithful servants, even when they are in prison or distress. John had humbled himself, and had done honour to Christ (ch. iii. 11; John iii. 29, 30); now he

begins to be exalted.—Is not this a beautiful, though partial, illustration and fulfilment of our Saviour's promise in the last chapter, v. 32?—John was indeed more than any of the ancient prophets, inasmuch as he was himself a subject of prophecy (Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1);—he bore witness to the fulfilment of their predictions;—and saw that which they only desired to see.

He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.—The weakest preacher of a complete salvation, who declares the finished work of the crucified, risen, and ascended Redeemer, has a higher office and a more excellent ministry than his immediate forerunner.—How great a privilege and happiness to preach, and to hear, the glad tidings of their Gospel, in all their clearness, simplicity, and fulness!—And yet even the best men, the most enlightened Christians, in this state of infirmity and imperfection, fall short of the happiness and glory of saints in heaven.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.—The ministry of John was made effectual, for the conversion and reformation of large multitudes of persons, many of whom once seemed unlikely to become servants of God.—Let us not despair of the most profligate and abandoned. Nor let the greatest sinner, who desires to return to God, despair of pardon and acceptance.—We must ourselves use a holy violence in entering the kingdom of heaven. We must strive to enter in at the strait

x

gate," and "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure." While we depend on the merits and grace of Christ, we must use honest, zealous, and persevering efforts in the ways of godliness.

Prophesied until John,—continued to be the means of instruction for the church.

If ye will receive it,—if ye are willing to receive it. Want of will, rather than the want of power and occasion, is the cause of unbelief.

This is Elias.—See Luke i. 17.—May the words of divine truth, and the dispensations of providence, be to us as so many Elijahs,—and "make ready a people prepared for the Lord!"

HYMN.

Now let a true ambition rise
And ardour fire my breast,
To reign in worlds above the skies,
In heavenly glories drest.

Behold Jehovah's royal hand
A radiant crown display,
Whose gems with vivid lustre shine,
While stars and suns decay.

Away each grovelling, anxious care,
Beneath a Christian's thought;
I spring to seize immortal joys
Which my Redeemer bought.

DODDRIDGE.

§ XXXVIII.

CHAP. XI. 16—24.

Christ upbraideth the unthankfulness and unrepentance of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the

markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented,

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, 'a friend of publicans and sinners. 'But wisdom is justified of her children.

20 ¶ 'Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not :

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago 'in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, *It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, *which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, 'That

it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

p Luke vii. 31.—q ch. ix. 10. r Luke vii. 35.—s Luke x. 13, &c.—t Jonah iii. 7, 8.—u ch. x. 15, ver. 24.—v See Is. xiv. 13. Lam. ii. 1.—y ch. x. 15.

READER. *It is like unto children, &c.*—By this similitude, our Saviour points out the inconsistency of the Jews, and their perverse opposition to ungodliness, under every form. Neither our Lord's own mild and benignant conduct, nor the more austere manner of John, could win their affections; neither piping nor mourning could excite their sympathy. When the heart loves sin and error, it is prepared to resist the appeals of the Holy Spirit under every variety of form.—God mercifully employs sometimes promises to excite our hopes, sometimes threatenings to arouse our fears; sometimes he sends prosperity, and sometimes he visits us with adversity. This manifold and variegated wisdom and grace of God are brought to bear upon us, in order that we may be suitably affected, and that our wills may be brought into a compliance with the divine will.—But awful and dangerous is the propensity of evil men to thwart or contradict the conduct and revelation of God under all circumstances whatever.

And they say he hath a devil.—Alas, how often does it happen that when men refuse to receive the message of God, they revile and find fault with his messenger!

Gluttonous, and a winebibber.—What malice and impiety! How

ST. MATTHEW XI. 16—24.

ought this to encourage us to bear reproaches patiently! See 1 Pet. ii. 19—25.

A friend of publicans and sinners.—

This was true in the best sense, and to the eternal honour of redeeming love. See Luke xv.

But wisdom is justified of her children.—The children of wisdom, i.e. believers in Christ and the Gospel, justify wisdom, i.e. bear witness to the excellence and power of the object of their faith. "They comply with the designs of Christ's grace, answer the intentions of it, are suitably affected with the various methods which it takes, and so evince the wisdom of Christ in taking these methods." See Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

The cities wherein most of his mighty works were done.—The means of grace abound more in some places than in others.—God keeps account of the religious privileges, and the motives and calls to repentance and godliness, which he bestows upon us. We may be careful about our advantages and opportunities of good; but God remembers them, knows their value, and considers our responsibility and duty. See Isa. v. 1—7.

They repented not.—Theirs was the fatal sin of impenitence arising from wilful unbelief. They persevered in sinning, and in refusing that remedy for sin, whereby its guilt may have been removed, and its power overcome.

Woe unto thee Chorazin — Bethsaida.—Bethsaida was a town of Upper Galilee, and Chorazin was

x 2

probably near it.—Neglected privileges and means of grace increase the condemnation of the impenitent.

Tyre and Sidon.—See Ezek. xxvi. 27, 28.

Exalted unto heaven,—highly favoured with the presence of Christ, and as the scene of many of his miracles:—*brought down to hell,*—to extreme desolation.—We are now "exalted to heaven" by the possession of the Gospel and Christian privileges. But the abuse of those privileges sinks men to destruction. See Heb. xii. 25—29.

It shall be more tolerable.—There will be various degrees of punishment in the world to come. A wicked Christian will be more severely condemned than a wicked heathen. His sin is greater; especially his sin of unbelief.

HYMN.

(Prov. viii. 14.)

Now let the listening world around
In silent reverence hear,
While from on high the Saviour's voice
Thus strikes the attentive ear.

"To you, O sons of men, I call,
And from my lofty throne
Reclin'd, in gentle pity bow
To bring salvation down.

"Forgetful mortals, yet be wise,
While o'er the grave ye stand;
Lest long-neglected love provoke
The vengeance of mine hand."

Blest Jesus, may thy Spirit breathe
On souls which else must die;
For till thy grace reflect the sound
Thy word in vain will cry.

DODDRIDGE.

§ XXXIX.

CHAP. XI. 25—30.

Christ, praising his Father's wisdom in revealing the Gospel to the simple, calleth to him all such as feel the burden of their sins.

25 ¶ ^a At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because ^a thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, ^b and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father : for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 ^c All things are delivered unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; ^d neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

28 ¶ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, ^e and learn of me ; for I am meek and ^f lowly in heart : ^g and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 ^h For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

^a Luke x. 21. ^b See Ps. viii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 19, 27 ; & ii. 8. 2 Cor. iii. 14. ^c ch. xvi. 17.—^d ch. xxviii. 18. Luke x. 22. John iii. 35 ; & xiii. 5 ; & xvii. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 27. ^e John i. 18 ; & vi. 46 ; & x. 15.—^f John xiii. 15. Phil. ii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6. ^g Zech. ix. 9. Phil. ii. 7, 8. ^h Jer. vi. 16.—ⁱ John v. 3.

answered and said, I thank thee.—Acquiescence in the will, wisdom, and goodness of God brings great relief to the mind when wearied and pained with considering the sin and ruin of ungodly men.

O Father,—such is his goodness, bounty, and love, *Lord of heaven and earth,* such his sovereignty, majesty, and power.

Thou hast hid these things.—“ God is not the author of their ignorance and error, but he leaves them to themselves and their sin becomes their punishment, and the Lord is righteous in it.” See John xii. 39, 40 ; Rom. xi. 7, 8 ; Acts xxviii. 26, 27.

The wise and prudent,—babes.—Gospel truth is more or less hidden from men who think themselves wise, who idolize their intellect, and indulge in spiritual pride and self-conceit ; see 1 Cor. i. 21 ; 1 Tim. vi. 20.—It is disclosed to persons of upright minds, and simple hearts, who humbly desire to be instructed and guided by heavenly wisdom. James iv. 6.

Even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight.—Under all the dispensations which we may witness and in which we may be called to share, may we have grace to yield this willing obedience, and to render this due honour, to the great and sovereign Disposer of events !

All things are delivered unto me of my Father.—Such is the glory of Christ as Mediator. The Father has delivered the government of all things into the hands of the Son, who has taken the manhood into God.—Let

READER. *At that time, Jesus*

us deliver all we have and are into his hands, and our salvation is secure.

No man knoweth.—None but God himself can comprehend his own nature, can understand the mode of his subsistence, or the workings of his will.

And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.—See 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is Christ who reveals the will, and manifests the love, of the Father. “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” John vi. 68.

Come unto me.—This gracious invitation is addressed to those who are burdened with guilt, and especially with a sense of that guilt and their consequent danger.—Such persons are invited to believe in Christ (Come unto me),—to submit to his government and discipline, complying with the obligations which he lays upon them (take my yoke),—and to receive instruction from his word and Spirit, and from his own example (learn of me).—The promise is REST,—peace of conscience, and happy repose in a sense of divine favour and protection. It is “rest from the power of sin, in a well-grounded peace of conscience; rest from the power of sin, in a regular order of the soul, and its due government of itself; a rest in God, and a complacency of soul, in his love.” Ps. xi. 6, 7; Heb. iv. 9.

Take my yoke upon you.—As Christians, we are called to liberty, but not to lawlessness; we are made free from sin, but not from the ser-

vice of God:—to this our freedom binds us.

Ye shall find rest unto your soul.—Your conscience shall be made tranquil with a sense of pardon and acceptance;—your understanding and mind shall repose in the possession of truth;—your affections shall rest in the choice of the highest good, even the favour and love of God. And this satisfaction shall endure for ever.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.—“His commandments are not grievous.” The obligations which he imposes, are welcome to those who love him, are agreeable to their renewed nature, and are easy of fulfilment by the strength which Christ himself imparts.—“1. Christ’s service is easy, as it is a rational service; consonant to right reason, though contradictory to depraved nature. 2. Easy, as it is a spiritual service; delightful to a spiritual mind. 3. Easy, as it is an assisted service; considering that we work not in our own strength, but God’s. 4. Easy, when once it is an accustomed service; though hard to beginners, it is easy to professors; the farther we walk, the sweeter is our way. 5. Easy, as it is the most gainful service; having the assurance of an eternal weight of glory.”

HYMN.

Come, weary souls, with sin distress’d,
The Saviour offers heavenly rest;
The kind, the gracious call obey,
And cast your gloomy fears away.

Here mercy’s boundless ocean flows,
To cleanse your guilt, and heal your woes;

ST. MATTHEW XII. 1—13.

Pardon, and life, and endless peace,
How rich the gift! how free the grace!

Lord, we accept, with thankful hearts,
The hopes thy gracious word imparts;
We come with trembling, yet rejoice
And bless the kind inviting voice.

STEELE.

§ XL.

CHAP. XII. 1—13.

Christ reproveth the blindness of the Pharisees concerning the breach of the Sabbath.

AT that time ^a Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read ^b what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat ^c the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, ^d but only for the priests?

5 Or have ye not read in the ^e law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That
158

in this place is ^f one greater than the temple.

7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, ^g I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

9 ^h And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue:

10 ¶ And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and ⁱ if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

^a Den. xxiii. 25. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1.—^b 1 Sam. xxi. 6.—^c Ex. xxv. 30. Lev. xxiv. ^d Ex. xxix. 32, 33. Lev. viii. 31; & xxiv. 9.—^e Num. xxviii. 9. John vii. 22.—^f 2 Chr. vi. 18. Mal. iii. 1.—^g Hos. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8. ch. ix. 13.—^h Mark iii. 1. Luke vi. 6.—ⁱ Luke xiii. 14; & xiv. 3. John ix. 16.—^k See Ex. xxiii. 4, 5. Deut. xxii. 4.

READER. *His disciples were an hungred.*—Even the people of Christ

ST. MATTHEW XII. 1—13.

must sometimes learn how to suffer need.

When the Pharisees saw it they said unto him, &c.—Here is a sad instance of superstitious zeal for a divine ordinance on the part of those who had neglected the spirit of it;—and of censorious reproof of other men who were really better than themselves. The Pharisees had explained away many of the precepts of God's holy law, relating to the heart and life (see ch. 5); but here they manifest zeal for the strict fulfilment of the fourth commandment, which they had, in some respects, overstrained by their interpretations and rules. "It is common for men of corrupt minds to think to atone for the looseness of their morals by their zeal in rituals and the external services of religion." But see Rev. xxii. 16—19.

Have ye not read what David did?—He entered into the house of Ahimelech the priest,—here called *the house of God*, because it contained the Tabernacle, and the manifestation of the divine presence,—and ate the shew-bread (See Exod. xxv. 23—30).—This was a work of necessity, for the support of himself and his followers.

The priests in the temple profane the Sabbath.—i.e. do a kind of common work on the holy day. Here again is a work of necessity for the performance of the temple-service. "Sabbath rest is to promote, not to hinder, Sabbath worship."

One greater than the temple.—The Jews considered that there was nothing greater than the temple, except God himself. Christ was

God in the temple of a human body.

I will have mercy and not sacrifice.—See note on ch. ix. 13.—The law of ceremonies or religious observances, must give place to the law of mercy or doing good when both cannot be fulfilled together. God does not appoint religious institutions as a snare to men, or in any way to interfere with their well being, either present or eternal.

Ye would not have condemned the guiltless.—Ignorance and inconsideration are often the sources of uncharitable censure.

The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.—In honour of him the seventh day of holy rest and worship was soon after changed from the last day of the week to the first,—the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10. Let us devote that sacred day to the solemn remembrance and worship of him, not only as Creator, but also and especially as our Redeemer from sin and death.

He went into their synagogue.—Ill treatment received from our brethren is therefore no real excuse for our alienating ourselves from public worship.

That they might accuse him.—The wickedness of men sometimes shows itself in proposing religious questions, or seeking religious advice, not for the sake of instruction, but in a captious temper, and with some bad design.

It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.—Our Lord had shown that works of necessity are lawful on the Sabbath; and he now declares the

same concerning works of mercy or charity. Let it be observed that our Lord's care in expounding the fourth commandment is one proof, among many, of the perpetuity of its obligation upon Christians.

Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like as the other.—The command of Jesus was accompanied by a power to perform it. So it is when he speaks to us in his holy word. He says Repent, believe, obey; and he gives us power, time, and opportunity, to do as he bids us. Shall we not hearken to his word? Shall we plead the false and vain excuse of a want of ability on our part? By the corruption of nature our hand is withered; but in Christ there is power to subdue that corruption, and to give life and energy to our dead faculties. Let us honestly endeavour to employ the strength which we have or think we have, and God will confirm it and give us more. Let us stretch forth our withered hands in the way of prayer—and faith—and prompt, vigorous, persevering effort, and we shall be blessed in our deed.

HYMN.

Father of all, in whom alone
We live, and move, and breathe;
One bright celestial ray dart down,
And cheer thy sons beneath.

While in thy word we search for Thee
(We search with trembling awe),
Open our eyes, and let us see
The wonders of thy law.

Now let our darkness comprehend
The light that shines so clear;
Now the revealing Spirit send
And give us ears to hear.

§ XLI.

CHAP. XII. 14—21.

A prophecy of Esaias fulfilled.

14 ¶ Then 'the Pharisees went out, and ||held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

15 But when Jesus knew *it*, "he withdrew himself from thence: "and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16 And °charged them that they should not make him known:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18 ^p Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, 'in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

1 ch. xxvii. 1. Mark iii. 6. Luke vi. 11. John v. 19; & x. 39; & xi. 53. | Or, took counsel.—See ch. x. 23. Mark iii. 7. s ch. xix. 2.—o ch. ix. 30.—p Is. xli. 1. q ch. iii. 17; & xvii. 5.

READER. *The Pharisees went out, &c.*—Having been defeated in argument, they resolved to proceed, if possible, to acts of unjust violence. Thus evil men sometimes wax worse and worse; they proceed from one degree of wickedness to another.

He withdrew himself from them.—His hour was not yet come, and he retired from threatened persecution; see ch. x. 23.—Here we behold our Lord withdrawing from the presence of impenitent and obstinate sinners, and even from their neighbourhood. Their malicious and determined opposition, in the face of even the most convincing evidence by miracle, was sin against the Holy Ghost.—Cases occur, in which the ministers and friends of religion must cease to plead with ungodly men. For instance, they must retire rather than provoke malice and enmity.

Great multitudes followed him.—Blessed are they who follow Christ even when the world reviles him!—Here again we see that when one place lost the benefit of Christ's presence, another was blessed by entertaining it. So it is with the Gospel in the world. While some reject it, to their ruin, others accept it, to their eternal welfare.

He healed them all;—all who needed healing, and felt their need, and followed Christ, seeking that benefit in faith.

And charged them that they should not make him known.—See here the humility of Jesus,—his prudent caution,—and perhaps also his righteous punishment of the Pharisees, in refusing to present to their minds, al-

ready wilfully blind, the light of farther evidence.

Behold my servant.—Most worthy object of devout and attentive contemplation!—The Son of God took upon him our nature in order that he might perfectly fulfil the reasonable service of a creature, and thus become qualified to atone for our transgressions, and to act as Mediator between God and man. Through him man renders complete obedience to God; through him God gives grace, and every needful blessing, to man. See Phil. ii. 5—11; Heb. v. 8.

I will put my Spirit upon him.—See ch. iii. 16, 17; John iii. 34; Heb. i. 9.

He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles, i. e., he shall reveal or publish true doctrine concerning the will and ways of God,—in other words, the Gospel,—to all people;—he shall teach all nations the way of salvation, righteousness, and peace.—As Prophet or Teacher of his church, Christ proclaims and expounds the work which he wrought as our High Priest, and the duties and privileges which ensue as a consequence of his great undertaking on our behalf.

He shall not strive, nor cry.—Consider the meekness and gentleness of Christ.—Herein we find at once a subject of thankfulness,—a ground of confidence,—and a pattern for imitation.

A bruised reed shall he not break.—How tender and compassionate is the blessed Jesus towards even the weakest and most ignorant of his sincere and humble followers! How ready

to encourage even the faintest and most imperfect of their good desires! How willing to assist even the most feeble and faltering steps in the way that leadeth unto life! He “deals very tenderly with those who have true grace, though they be weak in it; Isa. xl. 11; Heb. iv. 15. And, in general, the design of his Gospel is to establish such a method of salvation as encourages sincerity, though there be much infirmity; it does not insist upon a sinless obedience, but accepts an upright, willing mind.”

Until he send forth judgment, i. e. his doctrine, the Gospel, *unto victory*, i. e. with full effect, triumphing over all opposition.—May the conversion of the world to the faith and obedience of Christ soon give fulfilment to this glorious prophecy!

Or we may understand the whole of this verse and the foregoing, as meaning “He shall not subdue men by tumults, violence, or wars; but as the Prince of peace and grace, he shall deal gently with the weak, and cherish the least degree of goodness, and pardon the faults of the penitent, and not use severity of justice, until he have gathered his church out of the world, and overcome and judged his final enemies.”

And in his name shall the Gentiles trust,—or, as in our version of the prophet, The isles shall wait for his law. We must wait for Christ’s law, and be willing to be ruled by it, if we would rightly trust or hope in him. We must consent to be governed by his word, as well as saved by his work. “To trust and hope in his name Jesus, is to expect salva-

tion and all things necessary from him,—to despise comparatively all earthly promises,—to esteem, love, and desire heavenly things only,—and to bear with patience and tranquillity all the losses and evils of this life, in prospect of that felicity which he has purchased for us,” and which he provides.

HYMN.

(From Isa. xlii.)

Sing to the Lord in joyful strains,
Let earth his praise resound,
Ye who upon the ocean dwell
And fill the isles around.

O city of the Lord, begin
The universal song;
And let the scatter’d villages
The cheerful notes prolong.

Let Kedar’s wilderness afar
Lift up its lonely voice;
And let the tenants of the rock
With accents rude rejoice;

Till midst the streams of distant lands
The islands sound his praise;
And all combin’d, with one accord,
Jehovah’s glories raise.

§ XLII.

CHAP. XII. 22—37.

Christ healeth the man possessed that was blind and dumb. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven.

22 ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all the people were

amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David ?

24 'But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils but by †*Beelzebub* the prince of the devils.

25 And Jesus 'knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation ; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand :

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself ; how shall then his kingdom stand ?

27 And if I by *Beelzebub* cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out ? therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then *the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 *Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man ? and then he will spoil his house.

30 He that is not with me is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

31 ¶ Wherefore I say unto you, *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto

men : *but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whosoever *speaketh a word against the Son of man, ^bit shall be forgiven him : but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

33 Either make the tree good, and *his fruit good ; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt : for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

34 O ^dgeneration of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things ? *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things : and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

[†] See ch. ix. 32. Mark iii. 11. Luke xi. 14.—^s ch. ix. 34. Mark iii. 22. Luke xi. 15. † Gr. *Beelzebub*; and so ver. 27.—^t ch. ix. 4. John ii. 25. Rev. ii. 23.—^u Dan. ii. 44; & vii. 14. Luke i. 35; & xi. 20; & xvii. 20, 21.—^r Is. xlix. 24. Luke xi. 21, 22, 23.—^y Mark iii. 28. Luke xii. 10. Heb. vi. 4, &c.; & x. 26, 29. 1 John v. 16. ^z Acts vii. 51.—^a ch. xi. 19; & xiii. 55. John vii. 12, 52. ^b 1 Tim. i. 13.—^c ch. vii. 17. Luke vi. 43, 44.—^d ch. iii. 7; & xxiii. 33. ^e Luke vi. 45.

READER. One possessed with a devil, blind and dumb.—In like manner, “Satan blinds the eye of faith, and seals up the lips of prayer.”

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said.—The more our Lord was admired by the people, the more virulent were the Pharisees in their attacks. The malice of the wicked is often irritated by the growing reputation of the godly and sincere.—See ch. x. 25, and note.

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.—How ruinous the effects of jealousy and dissension! How absurd, as well as impious, the blasphemy of the Pharisees, as it is made to appear by our Saviour’s reply!

How shall then his kingdom stand?—Satan is too crafty to oppose his own interests; but yet God is able to overrule and defeat his subtilty.

By whom do your children cast them out?—Envious and malicious people are ready to condemn those very actions, done by persons whom they hate, which they are ready to applaud, if performed by their own friends. Such are the inconsistencies of ungodly men, who “do not the truth.”

Then the kingdom of God is come unto you.—May we have the comfort of being assured that the kingdom of God is set up within our own hearts, by knowing that the love of sin, and evil passions, and all the works of the devil, have been driven out, and made to stand aloof.—See Acts xxvi. 18.

How can one enter into a strong man’s house, &c.—“Men, through

sin, become the very house and dwelling-place of Satan, having, of their own accord, surrendered themselves to this unjust possessor; for whoever gives up his soul to sin, gives it up to the devil. It is Jesus, and Jesus alone, who can deliver from the power of this bondage.”

He that is not with me is against me.—There is no neutral ground in the spiritual warfare. We are either Christ’s friends, or his enemies. And the Lord Jesus clearly distinguishes between those who are his and those who are not. “Who is on the Lord’s side, who?” “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” “Let a man examine himself.”

The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.—The impious speech which gave occasion to this solemn declaration of our Lord, was that in which the Pharisees attributed his miracles to the agency of evil spirits; which plainly appears from Mark iii. 30, and even from the connection in which the words occur.—A man who obstinately resists the highest and strongest evidence which can be given, opposes the best means for his conversion, and resolutely quenches the influence of the Holy Spirit within his soul. One who refuses to repent so long, and under such circumstances, as to provoke God to abandon him to his own evil heart and ways, incurs a punishment such as that to which our Saviour here refers.—Still it is a certain and unalterable truth that mercy is extended to every sinner who repents; and any man who feels the reproofs and

checks of conscience, and who earnestly desires that he may not have thus grievously and fatally sinned, may take to himself the comfort of knowing that he has not yet fallen into the condemnation which he dreads. It has been well said that "they who fear they have committed this sin give a good sign that they have not."—See 1 John ii. 1, 2; 1 Tim. i. 12—15.

Either make the tree good, &c.—A corrupt and sinful life is the necessary result of a depraved and evil heart. Man cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God, until his heart has been renewed, and made pure and holy, by the power of divine grace. This grace all may receive through faith in Christ.—See 1 Sam. xxiv. 13; Isa. xxxii. 6; Jer. vi. 7.

The good—the evil—treasure (i. e. treasury).—The good treasury is a good heart, — a heart purified by faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and brought under the dominion of love to God and man. The evil treasury is a corrupt and wicked heart, or a carnal mind, influenced by love of self, and by real (though probably disguised) enmity to God, and want of charity towards mankind. "As the heart of man by nature is the fountain from whence all sin springs, so the heart renewed by grace is the source and spring from whence all good actions do proceed and flow."

Every idle word that men shall speak, &c.—Vain and unprofitable discourse is to be avoided, as involving sin and loss.—In this passage,

our Lord appears to allude especially to deceitful, false, or lying speech; or to that of an injurious, slanderous, or malicious kind, such as had given rise to his remarks.

By thy words thou shalt be justified—condemned.—Just as a witness in a court of law is said to acquit or condemn a party accused.—Our words and works are taken as proofs of the state of our hearts, and of our relation towards God. And therefore our common discourse, as well as the whole course of our conduct, will witness for or against us at the day of judgment.—See Ps. xxxix. 1; cxxxix. 4; cxli. 3; Job xv. 3; Eph. v. 4.

PSALM XXXII.

O blessed souls are they
Whose sins are cover'd o'er;
Divinely blest, to whom their Lord
Imputes their guilt no more.

They mourn their follies past,
And keep their hearts with care;
Their lips and lives without deceit
Shall prove their faith sincere.

While I conceal'd my guilt
I felt the fest'ring wound,
Till I confess'd my sins to Thee
And ready pardon found.

Let sinners learn to pray,
Let saints keep near the throne;
Our help, in times of deep distress,
Is found in God alone.

WATTS.

§ XLIII.

CHAP. XII. 38—50.

Christ rebuketh the unfaithful; and sheweth who are his.

38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees an-

swered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and ^sadulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 ^aFor as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and ^bshall condemn it: 'because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

42 ^cThe queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 ^dWhen the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, ^ehe walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and tak-

eth with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: ^fand the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, ^gbehold, *his* mother and ^hhis brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For ⁱwhosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

f ch. xvi. 1. Mark viii. 11. Luke xi. 16, 29. John ii. 18. 1 Cor. i. 22.—g Is. lvii. 3. ch. xvi. 4. Mark viii. 38. John iv. 48.—h Jonah i. 17.—i Luke xi. 32. † See Jer. iii. 11. Ezek. xvi. 51, 52. Rom. ii. 27. ‡ Jonah iii. 5.—m 1 Kin. x. 1. 2 Chr. ix. 1. Luke xi. 31.—n Luke xi. 24. o Job i. 7. 1 Pet. v. 8.—p Heb. vi. 4; & x. 26. q Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22.—r Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 19, 20, 21. s ch. xliii. 55. Mark vi. 3. John ii. 12; & vii. 3, 5. Acts i. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 5. Gal. i. 19.—t See John xv. 14. Gal. v. 6; & vi. 16. Col. iii. 11. Heb. ii. 11.

READER.—*Master!* So said the Scribes and Pharisees to our blessed Lord. And do not many thus call him Master, who yet re-

fuse to serve him?—See Matt. vii. 21, 22.

We would see a sign from Thee.—They had already seen many signs. But unbelief, pride, and vain curiosity, are never satisfied.

An evil and adulterous generation, i. e. a race of people who, by unbelief and disobedience, had violated their covenant with God. Such are all careless and wicked Christians.

There shall no sign be given it, &c.—“Though Christ is always ready to hear and answer holy desires and prayers, yet he will not gratify corrupt lusts and humours. Those who ‘ask amiss,’ ‘ask and have not.’ Signs were granted to those who desired them for the confirmation of their faith, as to Abraham and Gideon; but were denied to those who demanded them for the excuse of their unbelief.”

The sign of the prophet Jonas.—As Jonah, thrown out of the ship as a ransom for lives ready to be lost in a storm, lay three days and nights (according to the Jewish method of computing time) in the belly of the fish, as though cast out of God’s sight, and then was restored to the earth to preach repentance to Nineveh;—so Christ lay in the grave during the same period of time, after having been put to death as a ransom for the sins of many, and afterwards rose from the dead, to send abroad his Gospel, and to carry on the work of redemption.

Three days and three nights.—Compare Esther iv. 16 with v. 1.

Shall rise up in the judgment, and shall condemn.—A solemn admoni-

tion concerning a plain and important truth, that those who make some right use of inferior means and opportunities of good, will hereafter witness against those who neglect or abuse far greater privileges.

Greater than Jonas;—in his person, in his teaching, in the working of miracles, and in his resurrection. —*Greater than Solomon.*—Solomon was a king, Christ the King of kings;—Solomon had received wisdom, Christ is wisdom itself, and in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;—Solomon could only declare or utter wisdom, Christ can give it. And yet the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, as it would seem, without invitation, whereas we are earnestly and affectionately invited to come to Christ;—she went to Jerusalem without certainty of success and reward, whereas we are assured of a good welcome and an abundant recompence;—she travelled from a great distance, whereas Christ stands at our door, and knocks; and the word is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our hearts.

Then he saith, I will return into my house, &c.—“Strange! a fallen, corrupt spirit can have no rest but in the polluted human heart!” How solemn a warning against yielding to the power of temptation or the love of sin.

And the last state of that man is worse than the first.—See 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.—This fearful intimation may be profitably studied, not only by individuals who have received divine grace, but by all Christian churches which, through the goodness of God,

have shared in the blessings of the Reformation. Sad indeed will be their case, if they relapse into superstition, idolatry, and false religion!—It is easy to understand how the state of those men who fall from grace is worse than that of others. The soul that has been made the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, when it grows idle and remiss in God's service, loses divine life and power, and so is left vacant (empty), amuses itself, and seeks to supply its grievous deficiency with vanity and folly (swept and garnished). But the faculties of such a soul,—even its natural powers,—have been refined, exalted, and improved by the process through which it has already passed, and it has been hereby rendered capable of a worse influence than ever, and is in danger of falling under the power of such influence through its own carelessness, and in the way of righteous punishment.—Let us diligently cherish the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, by faith, and watchfulness, and prayer. May the Lord preserve us from apostasy, spiritual blindness, and spiritual death!

Thy mother and thy brethren.—These were either the children of Joseph and Mary, born after our Saviour's incarnation; or some more distant relatives (Mark iii. 21), perhaps the cousins of Jesus, children of Cleopas and Mary.

Who is my mother and my brethren?—How far was our blessed Lord from directing our attention to his mother as an object of religious veneration! How utterly at variance

with scriptural faith, and sound religion, are the follies of tradition and the dictates of a corrupt church, concerning this humble and holy woman! All nations shall call her blessed; but God himself has called idolatry accursed.

Behold my mother and my brethren!—Merciful and most encouraging declaration in favour of all obedient believers. The people of Christ, his friends and his brethren, are they who are united to him by spiritual ties, who have been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and who do the will of God from the heart. For them he has a peculiar affection, a special regard. See Heb. ii. 11; Gal. vi. 15, 16.

PSALM XII.

Lord, when iniquities abound,
And blasphemy grows bold,
When faith is hardly to be found,
And love is waxing cold,

Is not thy chariot hastening on?
Hast thou not given the sign?
May we not trust and live upon
A promise so divine?

"Yes, saith the Lord, now will I rise
And make oppressors flee;
I shall appear to their surprise,
And set my servants free."

Thy word, like silver seven times tried,
Through ages shall endure;
The men that in thy truth confide
Shall find thy promise sure.

WATTS.

§ XLIV.

CHAP. XIII. 1—23.

The parable of the Sower.

THE same day went Jesus out

of the house, ^aand sat by the sea side.

2 ^aAnd great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that ^che went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, ^c'Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some ^c'an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 ^c'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because ^c'it is given

unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 ^aFor whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, ^c'By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears ^aare dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But ^c'blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, ^c'That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it ;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while : for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word ; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it* ; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

a Mark iv. 1.—b Luke viii. 4. c Luke v. 3.—d Luke viii. 5.—e Gen. xxvi. 12.—f ch. xi. 15. Mark iv. 9.—g ch. xi. 25; & xvi. 17. Mark iv. 11. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 1 John ii. 27.—h ch. xxv. 29. Mark iv. 25. Luke viii. 18; & xix. 26.—i Is. vi. 9. Ezek. xii. 2. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26, 27. Rom. xi. 8. 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.—k Heb. v. 11.—l ch. xvi. 17. Luke x. 23, 24. John xx. 29.—m Heb. xi. 13. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.—n Mark iv. 14. Luke viii. 11.—o ch. iv. 23.—p Is. lviii. 2. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. John v. 35.—q ch. xi. 6. 2 Tim. i. 10.—r ch. xix. 23. Mark x. 23. Luke xviii. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 10. s Jer. iv. 3.

Reader. This chapter consists almost entirely of parables; that is to say, certain similitudes or allegories by which our Saviour was pleased to declare divine or spiritual truths under the image of natural objects, or common and well-known events. A parable is to the truth which it contains what the body is to the soul, or the shell to the kernel.

The parable of the Sower sets forth the causes of the failure and success of the Gospel in the hearts of men.—The Tares and the Wheat describe the mixture of good and bad men, sincere and false Christians, in the church, or visible body of professed believers.—The Mustard Seed and Leaven point out the gradual advance of the Gospel, and the converting or transforming power of divine truth and grace, in the world and in the heart of man.—The Treasure and the Pearl signify that Gospel blessings are above all price, and that nothing ought to be suffered to stand in competition with them.—And the parable of the Good Householder is intended to remind preachers of the Gospel that they should diligently study the whole compass of divine truth, in order to apply it seasonably and skilfully for the benefit of their hearers.

READER. A sower went forth to sow.—The sower is the Lord Jesus Christ, acting by himself, or by his ministers, with the agency of the Holy Spirit.—The seed is the word of God, written and preached,—the word of the king-

ST. MATTHEW XIII. 1—23.

dom, as it is called in v. 19. This is the immediate and primary means or instrument which the Holy Spirit employs in producing spiritual life and holiness. See Col. i. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 3.—The written word of God is the true seed. Tradition, whether written or unwritten, is chaff, or something worse. He who expounds and preaches the inspired word, having been lawfully called thereto by a Christian congregation, is a true and complete minister of Christ.—*The soil* is the world, or the soul of every individual; the word is designed to work upon the understanding, affections, and conscience of the hearers; and its effect is according to the state of mind and heart of those who hear it.

Some seeds fell by the way side.—Careless, thoughtless, or unbelieving men, who turn a deaf ear to God's word, or who hear it without attention and respect, derive from it no good impression whatever. Into their minds and hearts it does not even enter. And "the wicked one cometh," and soon occupies the soul with other subjects, and makes it yield to another influence. Our attention must be given, and our hearts engaged, as a first step towards obtaining benefit from Gospel truth.—The seed is said to be sown in that heart which is described as being hard and impenetrable as a beaten path. So it is, according to the design and intention of the Sower; and yet it is not received into the heart, through the fault of the hearer.

Some fell upon stony places.—These are those who hear the word of God,

z 2

and give some attention to it,—make profession of religion, and even seem to "run well" for a time; while yet their hearts are hard and unhumiliated,—all that appears to be good is only on the surface of their feelings, desires, and character,—they do not adhere to Christ by faith,—and so their judgment, will, and affections, are without any really good principles or habits. In some season of trial or temptation, when they practically feel the difficulty and cost of maintaining and acting upon religious principles, they take offence at the cross, fall away from their apparently hopeful state, and perhaps even abandon their profession of religion.

And some fell among thorns.—Worldly cares, or the pleasures attendant upon worldly wealth, are great, and sometimes fatal, hindrances to the growth of faith and true religion. They occupy or consume the energies of the soul, like weeds that draw away the strength of the soil; they propose vain objects of love or fear, of hope or aversion, and thus hinder the soul from seeking and receiving divine grace, like weeds that keep off the sunshine, and absorb the moisture of rain and dew; they bring with them many temptations and snares; they create false grounds of confidence;—and thus, in various ways, check or destroy the influence of divine truth within the heart. If we set our minds and affections on these things, we shall soon have no room left in our hearts for the things of God. "Ye cannot serve God and

171

ST. MATTHEW XIII. 1—23.

mammon." "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit.—See Isa. lv. 10, 11; John xv. 8.—The hearers of God's word who duly profit by it, and are made wise unto salvation, are those who honestly desire to be taught of God, who attend to the word spoken, with humility and faith, with consideration and self-application, and who yield to its influence upon their lives and conduct. They receive the word into their understanding, memory, and hearts; they adopt its principles and act upon its dictates; they listen to it and obey it as the voice of God. And, while some attain greater degrees of holiness than others, yet all bring forth those "fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ,"—through his Gospel and the power of his Spirit,—"unto the glory and praise of God."—The word of God, faithfully received through grace given, will make that heart good and fruitful, which is naturally bad and barren, or fit to bring forth only weeds.

Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, &c.—When men make some due improvement of grace already given, God will give more. If they neglect or abuse that gift, God will not only withhold a farther supply, but will take from them what they have already received, and will leave them to themselves,—to abuse and degrade even their natural judgment, affections, and conscience. He justly takes away light from those to whom he has given it, but who shut their eyes against its influence, and will

not perceive the things which it reveals. Wilful ignorance is punished by increasing blindness.

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias.—The same prophet who foretold most clearly the glory of the Gospel, was commissioned to declare emphatically the blindness and perverseness of many who would reject it.—This prophecy is indeed a terrible prediction of judicial blindness, and a solemn warning to ourselves. See Gen. vi. 3; Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12; Isa. lxvi. 4; Hos. iv. 17.

Lest at any time they should see, &c.—Such would be the happy effect of their giving due attention to divine truth, with humility and simplicity of mind; but since they would not do this, therefore they could not be converted and healed. Their own unbelief and impenitence hindered them from receiving these blessings. *Lest, &c.* denotes not the purpose or design of God, but the effect or result of wilful neglect and disobedience on the part of man. The issue is the same as though men had designed the hindrance of their own conversion.

Converted, and I should heal them.—There is a necessary connection between conversion and salvation. If these men had duly attended to the word of Christ, their hearts would have been converted, and they would have been saved, not only from sin itself, but from all its guilt and consequences.

Blessed are your eyes, &c.—Blessed in enjoying the peculiar favour of the Gospel revelation, and in receiving that divine message, with a lively

ST. MATTHEW XIII. 24—43.

faith, through grace mercifully given.
May that blessedness be our own!
There is no reason why it should
not.—See 2 Cor. iii. 7—18; Heb.
xi. 39, 40; xii. 18—29.

HYMN.

Ye sons of men, prepare the plough,
Break up your fallow ground;
The sower is gone forth to sow,
And scatters blessings round.

Father of mercies, we have need
Of thy preparing grace;
Let the same hand that gives the seed
Provide a fruitful place!

COWPER.

§ XLV.

CHAP. XIII. 24—43.

*Parables of the Tares, the Mustard Seed,
the Leaven, and the Hidden Treasure.*

24 ¶ Another parable put he
forth unto them, saying, The
kingdom of heaven is likened
unto a man which sowed good
seed in his field :

25 But while men slept, his
enemy came and sowed tares
among the wheat, and went his
way.

26 But when the blade was
sprung up, and brought forth
fruit, then appeared the tares
also.

27 So the servants of the
housholder came and said unto
him, Sir, didst not thou sow
good seed in thy field? from
whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An
enemy hath done this. The
servants said unto him, Wilt
thou then that we go and ga-
ther them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest
while ye gather up the tares,
ye root up also the wheat with
them.

30 Let both grow together
until the harvest: and in the
time of harvest I will say to the
reapers, Gather ye together first
the tares, and bind them in bun-
dles to burn them: but 'gather
the wheat into my barn.

31 ¶ Another parable put he
forth unto them, saying, "The
kingdom of heaven is like to a
grain of mustard seed, which a
man took, and sowed in his
field:

32 Which indeed is the least
of all seeds: but when it is
grown, it is the greatest among
herbs, and becometh a tree, so
that the birds of the air come and
lodge in the branches thereof.

33 ¶ "Another parable spake
he unto them; The kingdom
of heaven is like unto leaven,
which a woman took, and hid in
three † measures of meal, till the
whole was leavened.

34 "All these things spake
Jesus unto the multitude in pa-
rables; and without a parable
spake he not unto them:

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; "I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 'The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are 'the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; 'the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, 'and they shall gather out of his kingdom all || things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 'And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: 'there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

† ch. iii. 12.—a Is. ii. 2, 3. Mic. iv. 1. Mark iv. 30. Luke xiii. 18, 19.—s Luke xiii. 20. † The word in the Greek is a measure containing about a peck and a half, wanting a little more than a pint.—y Mark iv. 33, 34.—z Ps. lxxviii. 2. a Rom. xvi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 26.—b ch. xxiv. 14; & xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15, 20. Luke xxiv. 47. Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 6. c Gen. iii. 13. John viii. 44. Acts xiii. 10. 1 John iii. 8.—d Joel iii. 13. Rev. xiv. 15.—e ch. xviii. 7. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. † Or, scandals.—f ch. iii. 12. Rev. xix. 20; & xx. 10. g ch. viii. 12. ver. 50.—h Dan. xii. 3. Wisd. iii. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 58. † ver. 9.

Reader. The words of the prophet, here said to have received their full accomplishment in the teaching of our Lord, are found in Ps. lxxviii. 2. The things which had been formerly kept secret, or revealed only in types and shadows and by the gradual light of prophecy, were openly proclaimed by the preaching of the Gospel. See Eph. iii. 9; Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 7; Col. i. 26.

READER. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.—The sower, according to the exposition, is the Son of man. Christ proclaims divine truth, and implants holiness in the heart, by his Spirit, and the instrumentality of his word, written and preached.—*The good seed are the children of the kingdom*, that is to say, these are the produce of the good seed. They are such as are ruled by the word and grace of Christ, who is the King and Head of his people, — governed by the Gospel and that principle of holiness which they have received from Christ.

While men slept.—Satan watches for, and seizes, every opportunity of doing mischief to the souls of men. He takes advantage of every circumstance which may assist in propagating sin and misery. See 1 Pet. v. 8. —*His enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat,*—tares, the children of the wicked one, who bear the image of Satan, believe his lies, do his works, and submit to his tyranny; John viii. 44; Eph. ii. 2.—*And went his way.* “When Satan is doing the greatest mischief he studies most to conceal himself, for his design is in danger of being spoiled, if he be seen in it.—Such is the proneness of fallen man to sin, that if the enemy sow the tares, he may even go his way; they will spring up, and do hurt.”

When the blade was sprung up, &c.—The principles of good and evil are often, for some time, latent in the heart. But eventually they spring up, and appear; and they are known by the fruits which they produce. So also, in the world at large, good and bad men are undiscerned for a time; but circumstances arise, which mark their character.

So the servants of the householder came, &c.—Well may we be surprised to find so much evil in the church, seeing that it has been blessed with the good word and grace of God!

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this.—Christ does not upbraid the ministers of his Gospel with the existence of evil that does not happen through their fault.—We cease to be astonished at the prevalence of

sin and error in the visible church of Christ, when we consider that an enemy is at work, and that we have been forewarned of the success of his endeavours.

Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?—The zeal of good Christians is sometimes too hasty in seeking to root out sin and error from the church by the punishment of evil men. See Luke x. 54—56.

But he said, Nay, &c.—No such violent process of separating the good from the bad, the sincere from the hypocrite, is to be pursued, in the existing state of the church, by human ministers. Men may mistake in their judgment, and therefore are not fit to execute the task: and besides this, the bad may be made better, and therefore the time for separation is not yet. The church must, indeed, be kept free from scandalous offenders, by the exercise of godly discipline;—but the wicked are not yet consigned to punishment. Let us remember Samaria (compare Luke ix. 54, with Acts viii. 14), and the case of persecuting Saul.

Lest, while ye gather up the tares, &c.—Wicked men are preserved from present destruction partly for the sake of the godly; who are, in more ways than one, the salt of the earth.

In the time of harvest.—At harvest-time, the crop is ripe, and ready for the sickle;—the whole, being thus ready, is reaped, no part of the field being left uncleared;—and every man reaps what he sowed. So, at the last great day, men will be ready for judgment;—all will be

judged;—and all will receive according to their works.

I will say to the reapers, &c.—How plain and solemn a truth is here set before us! “Christ shall send forth his angels as his executing ministers; and they shall gather out of the world, and specially out of the visible church, all rebellious, unholy, wicked, scandalous, carnal men, and shall cast them into hell, which is likened unto a lake of fire, where they shall live in torment, and a self-afflicting conscience.”—See Mal. iii. 17, 18; iv. 1.—*Bind them in bundles to burn them.* “Sinners of the same sort will be bundled together in the great day; a bundle of atheists, a bundle of epicures, a bundle of persecutors, and a great bundle of hypocrites. Those who have been associates in sin will be so in shame and sorrow; and it will be an aggravation of their misery, as the society of glorified saints will add to their bliss.” See Ps. xxvi. 9; 1 Sam. xxv. 29.

Gather the wheat into my barn. Then shall the righteous shine forth, &c.—Here they are obscured, partly by adverse outward circumstances, and partly by their own imperfections and weakness; but yet, if, through grace given, they now shine in any measure as lights in the world, they will be hereafter made like their glorified Head, and their righteousness will “go forth as brightness;” their justification will be finally declared, and their sanctification will be complete.

The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed.—Such is the

progress of the Gospel and the grace of God in the world, and in the heart of every true believer. Having in itself a principle of life and growth, it will proceed from small beginnings to a wide extent and great perfection.—See Ps. lxxx. 9—11; i. 3.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven.—Not only does the Gospel spread and make advances in the world and in the soul, but wherever it penetrates it makes a beneficial change;—it gives a new and improved quality to that upon which it works, without destroying or altering its substance. And this change extends, by degrees, to every part. The believer is “transformed by the renewing” of his mind; he is made, in an ever-increasing measure, to bear the image of the heavenly instead of the earthly.—See Rom. vi. 13, 17; xv. 19; 2 Cor. iii. 8; iv. 14; Ps. cxix. 11.

HYMN.

Great God, as seasons disappear,
And changes mark the rolling year,
As time with rapid pinions flies,
May every season make us wise!

The solemn Harvest comes apace,
After this day of life and grace;
Time of decision, awful hour,
Around it may no tempest lower!

Prepare us, Lord, by grace divine,
Like the bright sun to rise and shine;
Then shall our happy souls above
Reap the full harvest of thy love.

§ XLVI.

CHAP. XIII. 44—58.

The Hidden Treasure. The Pearl. The Draw-net cast into the sea.—How Christ is contemned of his own countrymen.

44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and ^asell-eth all that he hath, and ^bbuy-eth that field.

45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls :

46 Who, when he had found ^cone pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and ^dgathered of every kind :

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world : the angels shall come forth, and ^esever the wicked from among the just,

50 ^fAnd shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them,

Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an housholder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure ^g*things* new and old.

53 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54 ^hAnd when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, inso-much that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

55 ⁱIs not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and ^jhis brethren, ^kJames, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

57 And they ^lwere offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, ^mA prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And ⁿhe did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

^a Phil. iii. 7, 8. ^b Isa. lv. 1. Rev. iii. 18.—^c Prov. ii. 4; ^d iii. 14, 15; ^e viii. 10, 19.—^f ch. xxii. 10.—^g ch. xxv. 32.—^h ver. 42.—ⁱ Cant. vii. 13.—^j ch. ii. 23. Mark

vi. 1. Luke iv. 16, 23.—s Is. xlix. 7. Mark vi. 3. Luke iii. 23. John vi. 42. t ch. xii. 46. u Mark xv. 40.—z ch. xi. 6. Mark vi. 3, 4. y Luke iv. 24. John iv. 44.—x Mark vi. 5, 6.

READER. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure, &c.*—The Lord Jesus Christ, with his gifts and graces, is the treasure hidden in the field of the Gospel, or the word of God. In order to obtain a saving acquaintance with him, and to gain a share of his blessings, we must make ourselves masters of that field, i. e. search the Scriptures with humility and faith, having parted with self-will, and evil prejudice, and false confidence, and counting everything but loss that we may “win Christ, and be found in him.” See John i. 16; Col. i. 19; ii. 3; John v. 39; Heb. iv. 1; xii. 15.

A merchantman, seeking goodly pearls.—All men seek happiness. See Ps. iv. 6, 7.—*When he had found one pearl of great price.* Christ is that jewel of incomparable value, which makes all who possess him truly rich, or happy for time and eternity.—*Went and sold all that he had, and bought it.* We must abandon all false hope, and all love of sin, and the service of everything which is opposed to truth and holiness, if we would have part in the benefits of Christ’s salvation. Salvation is the “one thing needful;” and should be prized above all other objects.

A net, that was cast into the sea.—Such is the Gospel preached in the world, that vast receptacle and dwelling-place of men of various and opposite characters. They who cast

the spiritual net, are the preachers of the Gospel.—*And gathered of every kind.* While the Gospel is being preached, many profess to adhere to it, some truly, others falsely; but, as long as the net is in the sea, and in process of filling, none can see what it gathers, not even the fishermen themselves. When the net is full—i. e. at the end of the world, when God shall have accomplished the number of his elect,—the final separation will be made, and all the members of Christ’s church will be dealt with, not according to their profession, but according to their character.—We must not think of separating from Christian communion, merely because a church may contain some bad professors as well as good. Wicked and hypocritical members of a church neither destroy the effect of appointed ordinances, nor defile those worshippers who are sincere, and humble, and watchful against the contagion of bad example.

Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?—This is a question which we should often ask ourselves when we have been reading or hearing the word of God.—We should endeavour, in the use of all means, and by prayer, to obtain a complete understanding of the sense of Scripture, and to make a wise and practical application of its lessons to ourselves.

Therefore every scribe which is instructed, &c.—We should make use of all that we learn, at proper times and seasons, as occasion may offer, especially for the benefit of others.

Former experiences and observations, and late discoveries, may be brought to bear together upon present improvement. — Ministers, in preaching the good word of God, should come forth,—not with new truths, for there is no such thing as a new truth, all that is new in matters of religion being false,—but with old truths in a new dress as to method and expression, “and especially with new affections.” And they should derive their doctrine from the whole compass of revelation.

Whence hath this man this wisdom, &c.—That was not a fit question for them to propose. Our Lord’s possession and exercise of supernatural wisdom and power was, of itself, sufficient to command their regard and reverence, their faith and submission. But needless inquiries are one means of perpetuating spiritual blindness; and they form one frivolous excuse for persevering in sin and error.

Is not his mother called Mary?—They might have added, And is not Mary of the house of David? But prejudice and passion teach men to overlook what they do not choose to see; and induce them to give attention to that alone which appears to suit their purpose or their humour.

He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.—“Unbelief,” it has been truly said, “is the great obstruction to Christ’s favours. ‘All things are,’ in general, ‘possible to God’ (ch. xix. 26), but then it is ‘to him that believeth’ as to the particulars, Mark ix. 23. The

Gospel is ‘the power of God unto salvation,’ but then it is ‘to every one that believes,’ Rom. i. 16. So that, if mighty works be not wrought in us, it is not for want of power or grace in Christ, but for want of faith in us. ‘By grace ye are saved,’ and that is a mighty work, but it is ‘through faith,’” Eph. ii. 8. That unbelief which hindered the performance of Christ’s miraculous works when he was upon earth, restrains his gracious influence now. It is that which “not only locks up the heart of a sinner, but also binds up the hands of the Saviour.”

HYMN.

Infinite excellence is thine,
Thou glorious Prince of Grace!
Thy uncreated beauties shine
With never-fading rays.

Millions of happy spirits live
On thy exhaustless store;
From thee they all their bliss receive,
And still thou givest more.

Thou art their triumph and their joy;
They find their all in Thee;
Thy glories will their tongues employ
Through all eternity.

§ XLVII.

CHAP. XIV. 1—12.

John the Baptist beheaded.

At that time^a Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works ||do shew forth themselves in him.

3 ¶^b For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

4 For John said unto him, 'It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, 'because they counted him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced † before them, and pleased Herod.

7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

9 And the king was sorry : nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel : and she brought *it* to her mother.

12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

^a Mark vi. 14. Luke ix. 7.—¶ Or, *are wrought by him*.
—^b M. rk vi. 17. Luke iii. 19, 20—^c Lev. xviii. 16; &
xx. 21.—^d ch. xxi. 26. Luke xx. 6.—† Gr. *in the midst*.

Reader. The Herod here mentioned as Tetrarch, or chief governor, of Galilee, was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. Some time after the events here recorded, he fell under the displeasure of the Roman emperor, was deprived of his government, and banished to Lyons in France.

READER. Herod—said unto his servants, *This is John the Baptist, &c.*—How great is the power and torment of a guilty conscience! Herod was haunted by fears respecting the man of God whom he had unjustly and cruelly put to death. See Prov. xxviii. 1; Ps. xiv. 5.—Yet the terrors of this man's conscience were no prelude to any change of heart, or reformation of conduct. Conviction is not conversion.

Herod had laid hold on John, &c.—But St. Mark (vi. 20) tells us that "Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy man, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." How dangerous is a partial reception of divine truth! How fearful to stifle, or to trifle with, religious impressions!—Faithful ministers of God's word have often become sufferers in the discharge of their duty, and on account of it. See 2 Chron. xvi. 10; xxiv. 20, 21; Acts xx. 20.

John said unto him, It is not lawful, &c.—Such was the faithfulness and holy boldness of this servant of the Most High. He protested against sin in all his hearers,—whether in

ST. MATTHEW XIV. 1—12.

the soldier, the publican, the Pharisee, or the prince.

He would have put him to death.—Wicked men are often irritated and enraged by faithful reproofs. See 1 Kings xxii. 8; Prov. ix. 8; xv. 10, 12.

He feared the multitude.—We often find that those persons who cast off the fear of God are slaves to the fear of man.—Many men, who would not hesitate to commit sin, on its own account, and in the sight of God, are yet restrained from the commission of unholy deeds by respect to the customs or opinions of men, and with a view to their own character or secular interests. This is a blessing and a safeguard to society; but it is nothing in favour of ungodly men themselves.

He promised with an oath, &c.—This was either the result of design, in order that Herod might find an excuse for doing what he was otherwise afraid to do; or else it was an effect of excessive and unhallowed excitement occasioned by carnal mirth and revelry.—A promissory oath, or vow, of the kind here described, is, of itself, vain and sinful. Such oaths should be, on all accounts, avoided. See Prov. vi. 2; Eccl. v. 6; ix. 2; Matt. v. 34.

And she, being before instructed, &c.—Awful depths of human depravity! A mother instructed her daughter to prefer this sinful, murderous, request! A young girl so far estranged from the fear of God as to obey the wicked precept, and so far lost to all feelings of tenderness and compassion as to become the instrument of such horrid cruelty!

For the oath's sake.—Here a pretended reverence for God forms an excuse for a real and direct breach of the law of God. This is no uncommon case. Such are the depths of Satan; such the deceitfulness of sin, and of the human heart.—*And them which sat with him at meat.*—How often, in like manner, is respect or compliment to poor mortals, or what is called a point of honour, employed as an excuse for sinning against God!

And he sent, and beheaded John in prison.—Thus fell the Baptist, as a martyr in the cause of God; for “he dies as truly a martyr that dies for doing his duty, as he that dies for professing the faith, and bearing witness to the truth.”

And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it.—Pious men are not ashamed of their persecuted brethren; but are ready to testify respect towards them, whether living or dead.—The church, in the Apostle's days, knew nothing of superstitious veneration of the relics of saints. It is remarkable that particular notice is taken of the burial of the two earliest martyrs, John the Baptist, and Stephen (Acts viii. 2).

And went and told Jesus.—Sometimes losses and troubles are made the means of sending men to Christ.—It is our duty and our privilege to go to the Saviour, with faith and prayer, in seasons of distress.

HYMN.

Sing, ye redeemed of the Lord,
Your great Deliverer sing;
Pilgrims for Zion's city bound
Be joyful in your King.

ST. MATTHEW XIV. 13—21.

A hand divine shall lead you on
Through all the blissful road ;
Till to the sacred mount you rise
And see your smiling God.

There garlands of immortal joy
Shall bloom on every head,
While sorrow, sighing, and distress,
Like shadows all are fled.

DODDRIDGE.

§ XLVIII.

CHAP. XIV. 13—21.

Jesus feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes.

13 ¶ When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart ; and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

15 ¶ And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past ; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart ; give ye them to eat.

17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled : and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

ech. x. 23 ; & xii. 15. Mark vi. 32. Luke ix. 10. John vi. 1, 2—/ch. ix. 36. Mark vi. 34.—/Mark vi. 35. Luke ix. 12. John vi. 5.—/ch. xv. 36.

READER. When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence, &c.—Here we have one more instance of our Saviour's prudent retirement from danger ; and of his departing from the presence and the neighbourhood of hardened and impenitent sinners.

Send the multitude away, &c.—How far inferior are the plans, and even the compassions, of men, to the designs and the mercies of God ! See Isa. lv. 8, 9.

They need not depart.—When all human resources and hopes may have failed, still God is able to supply our need.—Believers need not depart from Christ, in order to obtain the necessaries or comforts of life ; nay, they must not leave him, or their

ST. MATTHEW XIV. 22—36.

duty, under any such pretence. See Matt. vi. 31—34.

Give ye them to eat.—How could they comply with this demand? But “when Christ requires of us what of ourselves we are unable to perform, it is to show us our weakness, and to provoke us to look to Him that worketh all our works in us and for us.”

They say unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes.—And well might they add, What are these among so many? “It is a good thing to be properly conscious of the smallness of our own resources.” “Can God provide a table in the wilderness?” It is only unbelief that answers, No.—“The eye of sense and reason sees an impossibility of those effects which faith can easily apprehend, and divine power can more easily produce.”

He said, Bring them hither to me.—Let us bring our temporal goods and provisions to God in Christ, imploring his blessing.—Let ministers bring to Christ those instructions and doctrines which they are about to set before their hearers as spiritual food.

He commanded the multitude to sit down.—And they sat down; to partake of a bounty as yet unseen. Let us learn hence, if need be, to trust God for the supply of our temporal wants, even while the means and methods of supply may be out of sight.

He blessed, and brake.—Let us humbly and thankfully receive the creatures, and the supply of our bodily wants, as gifts from the hand of God, while we seek his blessing in the use of them. See Rom. xiv. 6; 1 Cor. x. 31; 1 Tim. iv. 4.

And gave the loaves to his disciples, &c.—Thus also with regard to that spiritual food, the word of God:—it comes from Christ, and is dispensed by his ministers. They are stewards in the house of God. Matt. xxiv. 45; 1 Cor. iv. 1; xi. 23; 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.—“It is observable that the meat was multiplied, not in the heap at first, but in the distribution of it. As the widow’s oil increased in the pouring out, so here the bread in the breaking. Thus grace grows by being acted; and while other things perish in the using, spiritual gifts increase in the using.” See 2 Cor. ix. 10.

And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.—So complete was the miracle. And herein was our Saviour pleased to give a lively emblem of the abundance of his grace, for the supply of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. See Ps. xxxvii. 19.

HYMN.

We praise thee, Lord, for every good;
For life, and health, and daily food:
Oh, grant us thankful hearts to take
All that thou giv’st for Jesu’s sake.

And may our souls be daily fed
With Christ, the true and living bread,
Till in thy presence, Lord, we feast,
With saints above, in endless rest.

§ XLIX.

CHAP. XIV. 22—36.

Christ walketh on the sea to his disciples, and landeth at Gennesaret.

22 ¶ And straightway Jesus

constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 'And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: 'and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him 'walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind || boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus

stretched forth *his* hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth 'thou art the Son of God.

34 ¶ 'And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and °as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

† Mark vi. 46.—‡ John vi. 16.—§ Job ix. 8—10, strong.—¶ Ps. ii. 7. Mark i. 1. ch. xvi. 16; & xvi. 63. Luke iv. 41. John i. 49; & vi. 69; & xi. 27. Acts viii. 37. Rom. i. 4.—* Mark vi. 53.—+ ch. ix. 24. Mark iii. 10. Luke vi. 19. Acts xix. 12.

Reader. It is necessary to know the usual division of the night by watches when the Evangelist wrote, in order to understand the note of time in v. 25.—The first watch was from six o'clock in the evening till nine;—the second from nine to twelve; the third from twelve to three in the morning;—and the fourth from three till six.

READER. When he had sent the multitudes away, &c.—Here our Lord

gives us an example of occasional retirement and secret prayer.—Let us dismiss the multitude of worldly thoughts and cares when we would draw near to God in holy exercises.

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, &c.—The disciples were in a state of apparent danger. But they were in the way of duty, for they had sailed at Christ's command; and therefore they were really in safety under his protection. The Lord sometimes commands his people as it were to put to sea, even when there is a storm approaching. But this he does in wisdom and in love. The church is often tossed upon the waves of this troublesome world, but always preserved. While the ship was tossed with waves, Christ was on the mountain praying. And "it is the singular comfort of the church of God, that in all her difficulties and distresses Christ is interceding for her; when she is on the sea, conflicting with the waves, Christ is on the mountain, praying for her preservation."

In the fourth watch of the night.—When the night was almost ended; not until the distress of the disciples had lasted for many hours. Sometimes the troubles of a Christian continue long; but the Saviour sends help in due time.—*Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.* How striking an exhibition of the deity and majesty of Christ! Job ix. 8; Ps. lxxvii. 19.—Let us remain at our post of duty as long as we can, notwithstanding difficulties or distress; and we shall have the comfort

of God's presence, and of his aid seasonably vouchsafed.

They were troubled, &c.—Sometimes, through our own ignorance, we are perplexed and disquieted even at the approach of that which is afterwards found to be an occasion of comfort or rejoicing. See Exod. iii. 6, 7; Luke i. 29.—An obscure or confused view of Christ, in his nature, work, and offices, often gives trouble instead of peace, especially in seasons of temptation or affliction. When we recognise him clearly, our fears abate.

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, &c.—The presence of Christ with us, as our friend and Saviour, is enough to banish despondency and fear. It is the privilege of faith to see Christ walking on the stormy waves, and to hear his voice speaking in accents of encouragement.

Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.—An exercise of faith, and an expression of attachment to the Saviour's person, with a desire to be ruled by his command. But we should not court danger: we should wait for calls to hazardous undertakings, instead of seeking for them. Perhaps Peter's zeal was greater than his faith:—or his self-confidence was too great.

And he said, Come.—The Lord Jesus condescended to confer the favour and to give the sign; perceiving, no doubt, the faith and love of the apostle, although mingled with much infirmity.

He walked on the water, &c.—Thus he became sensible of the sustaining power of Christ.—*But when he saw*

the wind boisterous.—Thus he became sensible of his own weakness, and his need of continual support by divine power.—*He was afraid.* Such are the fears which arise from remaining unbelief. As long as St. Peter looked to Christ with the eye of faith, he walked; but when he looked at the tempest with the eye of sense, he began to sink. See Isa. li. 12, 13; Ps. xliii. 5.—“The hand of Christ’s power,” says one, “laid hold on Peter; and the hand of Peter’s faith laid hold on the power of Christ. If we let go our hold on Christ, we sink; if he lets go his hold on us, we drown.”

Beginning to sink, he cried, Lord save me!—Let our sense of weakness, need, and danger, send us to Christ in prayer. Our Saviour himself, in the days of his flesh, prayed to the Father; Heb. v. 7.

Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him.—See Ps. xviii. 4—7; xx. 6; xxxiv. 4; xlvi. 5.

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?—Faith may be real, although weak and little; but its weakness and defect are the source of much trouble, discomfort, and loss, and meet with the reproof of Christ.—How unreasonable, as well as unbelieving, are many of our doubts and anxieties!

When they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.—Christ in the ship is here a striking emblem of Christ, by his grace, present in the soul.—See Ps. l. 15.

They sent out into all that country, &c.—Christians, who have the knowledge of the Saviour, should send out

into their neighbourhood, and into heathen lands, to bring the spiritually diseased to the good physician.

That they might touch the hem of his garment.—See ch. ix. 20—22. The experience of others in coming to Christ should encourage our application to him.

As many as touched him,—Christ saves all who come to him by faith, —*were made perfectly whole.*—And his salvation is complete, the cure which he effects is perfect. Let us remember that the healing virtue lay “not in their finger, but in their faith; or rather in Christ, whom their faith apprehended.”

HYMN.

Why those fears? Behold, 'tis Jesus
Holds the helm, and guides the ship:
Spread the sails, and catch the breezes
Sent to waft us through the deep,
To the regions
Where the mourners cease to weep.

Led by Christ, we brave the ocean;
Led by Him, the storm defy;
Calm amidst tumultuous motion,
Knowing that our Lord is nigh:
Waves obey Him
And the storms before him fly.

Render'd safe by his protection
We shall pass the watery waste;
Trusting to his wise direction,
We shall gain the port at last;
And with wonder
Think on toils and dangers past.

KELLY.

§ L.

CHAP. XV. 1—20.

Christ reproveth the Scribes and Pharisees for transgressing God's commandments through their own traditions.

THEN ^came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

2 ^Why do thy disciples transgress ^cthe tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

4 For God commanded, saying, ^Honour thy father and mother: and, ^He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, ^It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

7 ^Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 ^This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

2 B 2

9 But in vain they do worship me, ^teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

10 ¶ ^And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand:

11 ^Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, ^Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone: ^they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 ^Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16 And Jesus said, ^Are ye also yet without understanding?

17 Do not ye yet understand, that ^whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18 But ^those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19 ^For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders,

187

adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies :

20 These are *the things* which defile a man : but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

a Mark vii. 1.—b Mark vii. 5. c Col. ii. 8.—d Ex. xx. 12. Lev. xix. 3. Deut. v. 16. Prov. xxiii. 22. Eph. vi. 2. e Ex. xxi. 17. Lev. xx. 9. Deut. xxvii. 16. Prov. xx. 20; & xxx. 17.—f Mark vii. 11, 12.—g Mark vii. 6.—h Is. xxix. 13. Ezek. xxxiii. 31.—i Is. xxix. 13. Col. ii. 18. 22. Tit. i. 14.—k Mark vii. 14.—l Acts x. 15. Rom. xiv. 14, 17, 20. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Tit. i. 15.—m John xv. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 12, &c.—n Is. ix. 16. Mal. ii. 8. ch. xxii. 16. Luke vi. 39.—o Mark vii. 17.—p ch. xvi. 9. Mark vii. 18.—q 1 Cor. vi. 13.—r Jam. iii. 6.—s Gen. vi. 5; & viii. 21. Prov. vi. 14. Jer. xvii. 9. Mark vii. 21.

Reader. I do not know that any part of this section requires explanation, except perhaps the language of the fifth and sixth verses. It seems to have been a part of traditional superstition among the Jews, that the merit of devoting their property to religious purposes was such as to excuse persons who made such an offering from performing those relative duties in which their funds might have been,—and in fact ought to have been,—otherwise employed. So that a man who would have been bound to assist in maintaining poor or afflicted parents, was to be held excused, if he could say *It is a gift*, i. e. I have given or devoted to religious purposes, *by whatsoever thou mightest have been profited by me*, i. e. that portion of my substance which I might have been able to apply to your support or comfort!—Monstrous, indeed, are the perversions of God's truth, and of the real principles of piety and duty, which may be traced to traditions of the elders, or fathers, as well in the Christian church as in the Jewish. Such is

the wretched consequence of an attempt to add unto the words of God.

READER. *The tradition of the elders*—that which was vainly called the oral law, and supposed to be supplemental to the written law; just as, in course of time, it came to pass in the Christian church, that certain apostolic traditions, falsely so called, were supposed to contain an authorised comment upon the words of Christ, and the records of inspired evangelists and apostles. In this manner, a collection of fables and errors has been impiously,—or, at the best, by most awful and dangerous mistake,—regarded as the unwritten word of God!—Perhaps it was with a very sincere, but blind and erring, zeal, that the Scribes and Pharisees on this occasion came to our Lord, and said, *Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?* There is sincerity in error and superstition, as well as in adherence to scriptural truth, and the practice of piety.

But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?—A most emphatic and solemn question; extending, in its force and propriety, even to the present day. The dictates of divine revelation are, in a great degree, annulled and superseded by vain and frivolous tradition, in many corrupt branches of the catholic church. May God preserve our own section of the universal family of Christ from the effects of this contagion!—*Your tradition, said*

ST. MATTHEW XV. 1—20.

our blessed Lord. "They called it 'the tradition of the elders,' laying stress upon the antiquity of the usage, and the authority of those who imposed it, as the Church of Rome does upon Fathers and Councils; but Christ calls it *their* tradition.—Illegal impositions will be laid to the charge of those who support and maintain them, and keep them up, as well as of those who first invented and enjoined them; Micah vi. 16. *You transgress the commandment of God.*" The same is true concerning unscriptural dispensations; as in the case which our Lord instances.

God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother, &c.—According to the divine law, it is the duty of children to show respect towards their parents, and, if need be, to maintain them in their old age, or any other season of necessity. It was a flagrant example of the evil influence of human traditions, that, under their authority, an excuse could be found for the neglect of so primary a duty as this,—and that too under pretence of religion. It is to be feared that Christian tradition has led many persons to bestow upon ecclesiastical endowments those funds which ought to have been appropriated to the relief of poorer members of their own families. If we would really give ourselves or our substance to God, let us see that we do it according to the commands of God; and not merely according to the suggestions of tradition or the church.—How striking is the opposition between what God said, and

what man said,—as here displayed to us! And yet these dictates of men were made with every show of piety, and with great apparent zeal for the cause of God and religion. But, as it has been well remarked, "that which men say, even great men, and learned men, and men in authority, must be examined by that which God saith; and if it be found either contrary or inconsistent, it may and must be rejected." Acts iv. 19.

This people draweth nigh unto me, &c.—Such insincere worship, merely ceremonial and outward, is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. God looks on the heart, and requires its devotion. And "God is not mocked." See Prov. xxiii. 26; Jer. xii. 1—4.

But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.—Alas, the worship of Christians, as well as of Jews, has been spoiled in this way! The commandments, or institutions, of men have been placed on a level with the doctrines, or instructions, of God. For example, the council of Trent declared that oral tradition is to be received "with the same pious affection and reverence" as the word of God itself.—Let us beware of so fatal a delusion, and of all its approaches.

Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind.—And yet it was part of our Saviour's office to open the blind eyes. But when men are wilfully and obstinately blind, even He says, "Let them alone." How awful is this doom! It should adminis-

ter a caution against the insidious love of human traditions, and blind attachment to superstitious ceremonies and merely ecclesiastical observances.—See Hos. iv. 17; Rev. xxii. 11; Jer. v. 31; Rom. ii. 19, 20.

Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.—There are noxious weeds in that spiritual garden, the Church of Christ. But they will not abide the trial of the great day.—False systems of religious worship, and false statements of religious doctrine, are doomed to perish. “In matters of religion, if men will act according to the dictates of their own fancies, or the traditions and rules of their fellow-mortals, and not walk by the rule of God’s word, they may please themselves perhaps, but they never can please their Maker. Divine institution is the only sure rule of religious worship.”

Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart; and they defile the man.—Our blessed Lord teaches us that a corrupt heart is the fountain which sends forth polluted and polluting streams. Let us seek, and yield to, the influence of divine truth and grace on our affections, dispositions, and desires; and let us ever reason and act upon the practical recollection of that great Gospel truth, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

HYMN.

Lord, when we bend before thy throne,
And our confessions pour,
Teach us to feel the sins we own,
And shun what we deplore.

When our responsive tongues essay
Their grateful songs to raise,
Grant that our souls may join the lay,
And rise to thee in praise.

When we rehearse our wants in prayer,
May we our wills resign;
And not a thought our bosoms share,
Which is not wholly thine.

Let faith each weak petition fill,
And waft it to the skies;
And teach our hearts ’tis goodness still
That grants it, or denies.

§ LI.

CHAP. XV. 21—28.

Christ healeth the daughter of the woman of Canaan.

21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

† Mark vii. 24.—x ch. x. 5, 6. Acts iii. 25, 26; & xiii. 46. Rom. xv. 8.—x ch. vii. 6. Phil. iii. 2.

READER. *A woman of Canaan.*

—We have here an account of mercy exercised in favour of a believing Gentile, an inhabitant of Syro-Phœnicia (Mark vii. 26), descended probably from the ancient Canaanites. We may regard this event as an earnest of still greater blessings in store for the whole heathen world. The Lord Jesus Christ is “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” as well as “the glory of his people Israel.”

Have mercy.—Such was the plea of this humble suppliant. She did not depend on any supposed goodness or worthiness of her own, but she cast herself entirely on the Saviour's compassion, and unmerited favour. And so must we.—*On me.* Parents should regard benefits conferred upon their children as con-

ferred upon themselves.—And they should make their children's wants and necessities a subject of their prayers.—*O Lord, thou Son of David.* This was a direct acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah. And our faith must address itself to him in this his real character, and must look to him for the exercise of those offices of mercy which he has been appointed to fulfil. We must depend upon him in his covenant relation to his believing people.

My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.—Alas, how truly may this be said, in many cases, while the bodily health is good, and few complaints are made! Satan prepares grievous vexation for the soul, even while he allures it by fair promises, and detains it as a willing captive.

But he answered her not a word.—

This may seem strange. “What! is the fountain of mercy dried up? O Saviour! we have often found cause to wonder at thy words, but never till now at thy silence!” But it is no sign that prayer is not heard and accepted, when an answer is not vouchsafed exactly at the time, and in the manner, which we may expect. God sometimes designs in this way to prove, exercise, and increase our faith; and to make us more humble and importunate in suing for the desired blessing. See Ps. xxii. 1, 2; xlv. 23; lxxx. 4; Jer. xiv. 9; Heb. ii. 3. God understands the nature of his people's petitions, the spirit in which they make them, and the time and manner in which to answer them, better than they do themselves.

And his disciples came and besought him, &c.—The disciples interceded for her, requesting that her case might receive attention, and that she might be dismissed with the grant of her petition. But this, as it appears, was only that they might not be troubled with her cries. The love of good men, even in its greatest display, is far inferior to the love of the Saviour, though hidden from our view.

I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.—Our Lord's personal ministry on earth was chiefly confined to the Jews. See Acts iii. 26; Rom. xv. 8. Thank God, we know that the Gospel and the grace of Christ have been sent to the Gentile as well as to the Jew; and that all who believe in the Saviour receive the benefits of his salvation.

Then came she, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me!—Beautiful for simplicity, humility, faith, and fervour, is this short but comprehensive petition. Let it serve, in these respects, as a pattern for our own supplications at the throne of grace.—It is sad that these words are often employed as a careless or profane exclamation!

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.—Here is a still further trial of this good woman's faith. When our Lord vouchsafed to notice her, his answer was, at first, repulsive. And still he is pleased sometimes to exercise strong faith with great trials. When he designs to bestow great favours upon his people, he often sees fit to impress

upon their minds a deep sense of their own unworthiness. See 1 Pet. v. 6, 7.

And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.—If her heart had been proud, she would not have endured the Saviour's reply; if her faith had been weak, she would have been discouraged;—but now, with an humble mind and a lively faith, she overlooks everything like indignity and discouragement in what she had heard, and fixes her thoughts upon that which could be understood as affording a faint gleam of hope. She remembers that dogs are not wholly rejected and spurned; and upon this she founds the renewal of her modest plea. “An humble, believing, soul, that truly loves Christ, takes everything in good part that he saith and doeth, and puts the best construction upon it.” Faith derives comfort from that which unbelief views as an occasion of alarm.—When answer to prayer is deferred, let the delay excite us to importunity, and to increased humility.—*Crumbs from their masters' table.*—Let us regard the least of God's mercies as not only worth having, but worth seeking with faith and prayer.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith.—All that was good and praiseworthy in her conduct was the product of that one principle, faith,—a firm reliance on the goodness and power of him to whom she prayed. The Lord Jesus saw this faith and its operation: he sees the same grace wherever it exists;—and whenever he sees it, he

ST. MATTHEW XV. 29—39.

does not fail to reward it with the tokens of his approbation. The greatness of this woman's faith had appeared in the fruits which it produced; in the humility and meekness, the wisdom, the patience and perseverance which had been its manifest result. No mortal tongue can satisfactorily declare to us the existence of this great religious principle within ourselves, nor can we expect to be assured of it by a voice from heaven; but if we find that it produces in our temper and conduct the same results as those which have been displayed in the history before us, we have abundant reason to thank God and take courage.

And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.—The prayer of Christian faith,—a prayer which has for its foundation the promises of a God who cannot lie,—is a prayer which never can be lost. It may be answered in a way that we do not expect; it may be answered at a time much later than we had hoped; but, in God's own way, and in God's own time, it will infallibly secure to us a blessing.—Let us derive wisdom and encouragement from the eminent success of this woman's distinguishing graces,—seriousness, humility, faith, and perseverance in prayer.

HYMN.

O help us, Lord! each hour of need
Thy heavenly succour give;
Help us in thought, and word, and deed,
Each hour on earth we live!

O help us when our spirits bleed
With contrite anguish sore;
2 c

And when our hearts are cold and dead,
O help us, Lord, the more!

O help us, through the prayer of faith,
More firmly to believe;
For still the more the servant hath;
The more shall he receive.

O help us, Jesus, from on high!
We know no help but Thee:
O help us so to live and die,
As thine in heaven to be!

M.

§ LII.

CHAP. XV. 29—39.

Christ healeth great multitudes; and with seven loaves and a few little fishes feedeth four thousand men, besides women and children.

29 'And Jesus departed from thence, and came 'nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

30 'And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:*

31 Inasmuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 ¶ 'Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue*

with me now three days, and have nothing to eat : and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude ?

34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye ? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37 And they did all eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

g Mark vii. 31.—s ch. iv. 18.—a Ia. xxiv. 5. 6. ch. xi. 5. Luke vii. 22.—b Mark viii. 1.—c 2 Kin. iv. 43.—d ch. xiv. 19.—e 1 Sam. ix. xiii. Luke xiii. 18.—f Mark viii. 16.

For remarks on this passage the Reader is referred to the Commentary on chap. iv. 24, 25, and xiv. 14—21.

§ LIII.

CHAP. XVI. 1—12.

The Pharisees require a sign. Jesus warneth his disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather* : for the sky is red.

3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to day* : for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky ; but can ye not discern the signs of the times ?

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 ¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

8 Which when Jesus perceiv-

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 1—12.

ed, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread ?

9 ' Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up ?

10 ' Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up ?

11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees ?

12 Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

a Ch. xii. 20. Mark viii. 11. Luke xi. 16; & xii. 54—56. b 1 Cor. i. 22.—c ch. xii. 30.—d Mark viii. 14.—e Luke xii. 1.—f ch. xiv. 17. John vi. 9.—g ch. xv. 34.

Reader. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came.—Here we see men of opposite opinions, and at variance with each other on many points, agreeing in a wicked attempt against Christ and the truth of the Gospel. It was thus that Herod and Pilate were made friends when they became the common enemies of the persecuted Jesus. And still it is no unusual thing for ungodly men, while they are ready to bite and devour one another, to combine in plans and acts of hostility against religion and religious people. So

great is the malice of Satan and his agents against holiness and truth!

—They *came*, we are told, *tempting* Jesus; that is, pretending to desire a proof of his authority and mission, but really seeking to entrap and disgrace him. Such is the hypocrisy which wicked men are ready to employ in order to attain their ends.—They asked for *a sign from heaven*. Many signs had already been given by the miracles which our Saviour had wrought, and these were sufficient to convince men of humble and candid minds, and were every way worthy of the divine Being who performed them. But proud and unbelieving men desire to have a sign of their own choosing;—they seek to prescribe terms to God himself;—they are not satisfied with the proofs which God is pleased to give,—and should he deign to give those which they proudly desire, still they would remain unsatisfied and unconvinced.

And this is one instance of the deceitfulness of sin, and of the human heart. See also Luke xvi. 30, 31.—When unbelieving Jews “had signs from heaven, they tempted Christ, saying, Can he furnish a table in the wilderness? (1 Cor. x. 9). Now that he had furnished a table in the wilderness, they tempted him, saying, Can he give us a sign from heaven?”—Let us take warning from these instances of blind and perverse self-will. Let us consider the wisdom, as well as the blessedness, of humility, faith, and devout submission to the teaching and the will of God.

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 1—12.

He answered and said unto them.—Not without mourning over their ungodliness and folly, for St. Mark tells us (viii. 12) that “he sighed deeply in his spirit.”—By his answer our blessed Lord reproves the ignorance and stupidity of unbelieving men with regard to spiritual things and the truths of religion, especially as contrasted with their shrewdness and intelligence in temporal matters. Men take pains to inform themselves about things in which they feel that their interest and happiness are concerned, and hence they become well skilled in them; and the reason why they know so little of religious truth is that they are not persuaded and sensible of its importance. Why is it that men of good common sense, men of learning, men of science, are often so unconcerned with regard to Christian truth and the interests of religion,—why is it that they are often so ignorant, so ostentatiously ignorant, of Gospel facts? Is it that religion is really beneath their notice? No. It is that they have no love for the pursuit; no wish, no desire to be instructed in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Can ye not discern the signs of the times? See Jer. viii. 7—9.—It is a good and profitable exercise, and a source of much practical wisdom, to compare the state of the world, and the dispensations of divine providence, with the declarations of God’s will in his holy word. If the Jews, in our Saviour’s time, had considered what was passing before

their eyes, with due reference to the predictions of their own prophets, this would have become a means of leading them to a knowledge of the truth concerning the Messiahship of Jesus.

A wicked and adulterous generation, &c.—See note on ch. xii. 38—40.—The sign demanded by curious, proud, and captious men was absolutely refused; but this refusal was accompanied with the promise of a miracle which should be abundantly sufficient for the conviction and comfort of men of humble and believing minds, while, at the same time, it would leave without excuse all those who should continue in unbelief.

He left them and departed.—Christ forsakes those who in their hearts depart from him. The Gospel, as we have already seen, abounds with warnings of this kind.

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.—We must be on our guard against false doctrines and evil principles. They are very insidious and dangerous; and if we do not fortify our minds by a devout study of God’s word, by watchfulness, and prayer, we may easily become a prey to the most mischievous delusions.

O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves because ye have brought no bread?—One cause of the weakness of our faith is our forgetfulness of what God has already wrought on our behalf. We should remember and consider attentively what he has already done, if we would rightly trust Him for what

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 1—12.

he is yet to do. "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands." Ps. cxliii. 5.

How is it that ye do not understand?—Surely this word of expostulation may well be addressed to us also, so far as we are deficient in spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Such want arises, not from any defect in divine teaching, but from our own carelessness and dulness. How great are the patience and goodness of God, who gives us line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little, in order to instruct us in the things that belong unto our peace! Let us thankfully and wisely make use of this instruction while we have it.

He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.—False doctrine, and error in opinion or judgment in matters of religion, is not a matter of indifference. Our belief has great influence on our practice; and we are responsible for what we believe as well as for what we do. When God gives us means of ascertaining truth and avoiding error, it is as much our duty to do so as it is to perform what is good and depart from evil.—Doctrine is like leaven; it spreads through the soul, and imparts to it a certain quality.

The doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.—Spiritual pride, hypocrisy, superstition and pretences of devotion, together with a desire of tyrannising over men's consciences, were the distinguish-

ing marks of the Pharisee;—intellectual pride and worldly-mindedness, with scepticism veiled under an appearance of candour, were the peculiar sins of the Sadducee. "In our age, we may reckon atheism and deism to be the leaven of the Sadducees, and Popery to be the leaven of the Pharisees, against both which it concerns all Christians to stand upon their guard." And we should fortify ourselves against these evils, not only in their extremes, and their gross developements, but even in their more plausible and moderate forms. Pseudo-rationalism, or false philosophy, on the one hand, and ultra high-churchmanship, or blind deference to supposed authority and fabulous tradition, on the other, are the Scylla and Charybdis of our times.

HYMN.

God is a spirit, just and wise,
He sees our inmost mind;
In vain to heaven we raise our cries,
And leave our souls behind.

Nothing but truth before his throne
With honour can appear;
The painted hypocrites are known
Through the disguise they wear.

Their lifted eyes salute the skies,
Their bended knees the ground;
But God abhors the sacrifice
Where not the heart is found.

Lord, search my thoughts, and try my ways,
And make my soul sincere;
Then shall I stand before thy face
And find acceptance there.

WATTS.

§ LIV.

CHAP. XVI. 13—20.

The people's opinion of Christ, and Peter's confession of him.

13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, ' Whom do men say that I the Son of man am ?

14 And they said, ' Some say that thou art John the Baptist : some, Elias ; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am ?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, ' Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : ' for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but ' my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That ' thou art Peter, and ' upon this rock I will build my church ; and ' the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 ' And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 ' Then charged he his

198

disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

¶ Mark viii. 27. Luke ix. 18.—A ch. xiv. 2. Luke ix. 7. 8. 9.—I ch. xiv. 28. Mark viii. 29. Luke ix. 20. Job vi. 69 ; & xi. 27. Acts viii. 27 ; & ix. 20. 1 John iv. 15 ; & v. 8.—Heb. i. 2. 8.—Eph. ii. 8.—1 Cor. ii. 16. Gal. i. 16.—John i. 42.—Eph. ii. 20. Rev. 21. 14.—Job xxxviii. 17. Ps. ix. 13 ; & cvii. 18. Is. xxxviii. 10. p. ch. xviii. 18. John xx. 23. ¶ ch. xvii. 9. Mark viii. 30. Luke ix. 21.

Reader. Cæsarea Philippi, mentioned in v. 13, was a town in the northern part of Judea, anciently called Dan, (Gen. xiv. 14), and Lais (Judg. xviii. 7) near mount Lebanon ; it was called Cæsarea, in honour of the Roman emperor Tiberius Cæsar, and Cæsarea of Philip, because it was enlarged and beautified by Philip the tetrarch, son of Herod. The other Cæsarea was on the borders of the Mediterranean.

From the fact stated in v. 14, that our Lord was commonly supposed to be either John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, we learn that the doctrine of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls,—that is to say, the opinion that the souls of men at their death passed into other bodies,—was very generally received among the Jews in those days.

I think it necessary to give you a minute explanation of v. 17, 18, 19 ; partly because those verses contain various allusions which perhaps you may not readily understand, and partly because they have been perverted and misinterpreted so as to appear to lend a sanction to some corruptions of the Church of Rome, and to other hierarchichal pretensions. I will make my remarks chiefly in the way of paraphrase upon our

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 13—20.

blessed Saviour's words. May He, by His Spirit, lead us into all truth, and preserve us from human errors, and from the superstitions of fallible churches!

Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona i.e. the son of Jonah (John iv. 42): *for flesh and blood* i. e. man hath not revealed it unto thee,—thou hast not attained this knowledge by the exercise of thy own wisdom or reason, or by any human instruction, *but my Father which is in heaven*, thou hast received it from above, by the operation of the Holy Spirit accompanying the dispensation of the Gospel; by the testimony which my Father has given concerning me, and has, through grace vouchsafed unto thee. *And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter*, the name which I have given thee is Cephias or Peter (John i. 42), which means a stone or rock,—and I declare unto thee, with reference to this name, and in further explanation of it, *that upon this rock I will build my church*,—i. e. as thou hast stood forward and made this confession which lies at the very foundation of the faith of the Gospel, I will grant unto thee the distinguishing honour of being the first to preach that Gospel with success to the Jews (See Acts ii.) and to the Gentiles (See Acts x.)—*and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, i. e. all the craft and artifice of Satan and wicked spirits, which may be compared to the council of a city held in the gates,—and all the power and assaults of opponents, like troops rushing forth from the gates of an enemy's city or camp,—in one word,

all the plots, stratagems, and machinations of the enemies of my church, and all their attacks and violent opposition, shall be unable to destroy or overthrow it;—there shall always be a body of men believing in my name unto the end of the world.—*And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*,—i. e. I will give thee power and authority, by the Holy Spirit, to declare the doctrines, and to determine the government and order, of the church,—(an office which St. Peter and the other apostles discharged by their personal ministry during their life-time, and continue to discharge by means of their inspired writings);—*and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*,—i. e. all that you say and do, under divine sanction and guidance, shall be ratified,—whatsoever you declare to be forbidden shall be really unlawful, and whatsoever you declare to be permitted or required shall be lawful unto men, or even a matter of obligation and duty. In one word, you shall be an authoritative teacher of my church; my believing people shall receive the laws of my kingdom at your mouth.

Some suppose that by "this rock" our Saviour meant the confession of faith which Peter had just made; and others think that He pointed to his own sacred person, inasmuch as He is indeed the chief corner-stone of the spiritual building. But the marked reference to the name of Peter, and the connection and tenor of our Lord's observations in this place,

seem to compel us to understand the words in question as relating to the person of the apostle. Perhaps no other interpretation would ever have been given, if Romanists had not perverted and misapplied the passage with a view to prove their false assertion that St. Peter possessed authority over the other apostles, and that a successor in that pretended authority exists in the Bishop of Rome. The assertion and pretended derivation of such ecclesiastical authority is mere usurpation and imposture, from beginning to end ; but why should we be reluctant to discover and admit the fact that the Lord Jesus was pleased to bestow upon St. Peter a peculiar honour, in token of his approbation of his plain and good confession ? The honour given to this apostle on account of his profession was, in fact, bestowed upon that profession itself, —and is well adapted to mark its value and importance to the end of time. And it must be remembered that, although St. Peter was the first to preach successfully to Jews and Gentiles that great truth which he was the first to assert in reply to our Saviour's question, yet the other apostles afterwards were successful in the same employment, and some of them, probably, on a more extensive scale. Other apostles and prophets, in common with St. Peter, were "the foundation" on which the church was built ; see Eph. ii. 10 ; Rev. xxi. 14. St. Peter had no authority over the rest of the apostles ; See Matt. xviii. 18 ; xx. 26 ; Acts xv ; Gal. ii. 11.—And it would seem

that the reproof which was directed to that apostle almost immediately after this promise was given to him, recorded in this same chapter,—and his subsequent disgrace,—were designed at once as means of keeping him humble, and of warning the church against the falsehoods and tyranny which have marked the history of his pretended successors.

The expressions, "to bind" and "to loose" were commonly understood by the Jews with reference to authoritative teaching in matters of religion : *to bind* signifies *to forbid or declare unlawful* ; *to loose* means *to permit, or declare lawful*. Such was the authority given by Christ himself to his inspired apostles ; but in this they have no successors. It is the duty of ministers of the Gospel, in our day, to proclaim the laws of the kingdom ; but they have no authority either to enact or to annul them. Such authority belongs to Christ himself, originally ; to the apostles, by delegation ; to others, not at all.

READER. Some say that thou art John the Baptist, &c.—How many and various were the opinions of men concerning Christ ! How gross the mistakes into which some men fell respecting Him ! And so it is to the present day. There is but one right view of Christ,—one true opinion concerning him and his glorious work ; but how numerous, how diversified, are the sentiments of men on this great subject ! Some say one thing, and some another. And yet all these various doctrines, except

one, must be more or less distant from the truth. May we have grace and wisdom to behold him, by a lively faith, as the Christ, the Son of Man and the Son of the living God, the Saviour of the world,—our Prophet, Priest, and King !

These various opinions display a mixture of ignorance and knowledge respecting the condition of the soul of man after death. The people who held these sentiments must have believed in the existence of the immortal spirit after its departure from the body ; but they also believed the false doctrines of some philosophers who had taught that the soul which has animated our body passes into another, upon the dissolution of its former tenement. Let us beware of mixing the speculations of human philosophy with the declarations of Divine truth. Let it be our aim,—by humility, by prayer, by a careful study of God's word, with a simple adherence to the pure record of inspiration,—to attain that inestimable blessing, a right judgment in all things ! God's written word is a light to our feet ; human traditions and philosophy are a mist and darkness, in spiritual things.

But whom say ye that I am ? "This is a question we should every one of us be frequently putting to ourselves, 'Whom do we say, what kind of one do we say, that the Lord Jesus is? Is he precious to us? Is he in our eyes the chief among ten thousand? Is he the beloved of our souls?' It is well or ill with us, according as our thoughts are right or wrong concerning Jesus Christ."

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—Such was the Apostle's right belief ; such his open and plain profession. May we also believe "with the heart unto righteousness," and with the mouth make confession "unto salvation." May we be at all times thankful for "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ;" and always watchful lest by any evil works we should be found to deny that blessed Saviour whom we acknowledge and honour with our lips.

Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona. See ch. xiii. 16 ; Ps. lxxxix. 15. Well therefore may we make it the object of our ardent desire, with St. Paul, to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection (Phil. iii. 8—11) ; and well may we make it the subject of our prayer, in behalf of ourselves and others, that we "may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." (See Eph. iii. 14—19.)

Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.—The mere light of nature could not discover a Saviour, or satisfy us of the love of God towards ourselves as fallen and guilty creatures ; nor can our own understandings and hearts receive the message of salvation without divine illumination and influence. *But my father which is in heaven.* See ch. xi. 25. May God thus shine into our hearts by his works, his word, and his heavenly grace !

Upon this rock will I build my Church.—Let us adore at once the sovereignty and the wisdom of the great Head of the Church in his

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 21—28.

choice of instruments for the first propagation of the Gospel; and let us consider the honour which our Saviour has here put upon the possession and acknowledgment of pure and simple faith in himself.

The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—Craft and artful policy, iniquitous sentences and censures, violent and arbitrary measures,—all these things have been employed against the Gospel of the Saviour, and the members of his church, but in vain. Let us confidently trust in the Almighty arm of the Redeemer, no less than in his love and compassion. Why do the heathen rage? Psalm ii.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.—This power of binding and loosing,—of teaching with authority,—was given to the other apostles, as well as to St. Peter, ch. xviii. 18. Let us thankfully and reverently receive those inspired instructions which have been transmitted to us in their writings. Our Lord, on various occasions, confirmed the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, (e. g. Luke xxiv. 27, 44; John v. 39); and in the passage now before us he affixes his seal to the Apostolical writings. We receive as divine, without hesitation, all the recorded teaching of the Apostles, seeing that those chosen men were empowered and commissioned to declare the will of God concerning us. And we are sure that we find the mind of Christ no less in the Apostolical Epistles, than in the very words of our Saviour during his per-

sonal ministry on earth.—May we have grace to receive, with firm affection and becoming veneration, all those holy Scriptures which have been written for our learning!

HYMN.

Christ is the sure foundation-stone
Which God in Zion lays,
To build our heavenly hopes upon,
And his eternal praise.

Though foolish builders, scribe or priest,
Reject it with disdain,
Yet on this rock the church shall rest
And foes shall rage in vain.

What though the gates of hell withstood!
Yet must this building rise;
'Tis thy own work, Almighty God,
And wondrous in our eyes.

Lord, grant thy grace to each of us
To build on Christ alone;
And in his church, unto his praise,
To be a lively stone.

WATTS.

§ LV.

CHAP. XVI. 21—28.

Jesus foreshoweth his death, reproving Peter for dissuading him from it: and admonisheth them that will follow him to bear the cross.

21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, ' Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 21—28.

23 But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, 'Satan : 'thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or 'what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?

27 For "the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels : ' and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you, 'There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

ch. ix. 17. Mark viii. 31; & ix. 31; & x. 33. Luke ix. 22; & xviii. 31; & xxiv. 6, 7. † Gr. *Pity thyself.* — see 2 Sam. xix. 22.—† Rom. viii. 7.—† ch. x. 36. Mark viii. 34. Luke ix. 23; & xiv. 27. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Thes. i. 8. 2 Tim. iii. 12.—† Luke xvii. 33. John xii. 23.—† Ps. xlix. 7. 8.—† ch. xxvi. 64. Mark viii. 36. Luke ix. 26.—† Dan. vii. 10. Zech. xiv. 5. ch. xxv. 31. Jer. xiv. 9. Job. xxxiv. 11. Ps. lxxii. 12. Prov. xxiv. 12. Jer. xvii. 10; & xxxii. 19. Rom. ii. 6. 1 Cor. iii. 8. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Pet. i. 17. Rev. ii. 23; & xxii. 12.—† Mark ix. 1. Luke ix. 27.

Reader. There are some points in these verses which may require a little explanation.

It may be asked, In what sense did our Lord use the term *Satan* in his answer to Peter, ver. 23? Some interpreters refer us to the original meaning of the word, which is *opposer, adversary*, and so would render the phrase, *Get thee behind me, thou opponent of my work!* But the word is not used in this sense in the New Testament, being employed only as an appellative, or the name of that great adversary of God and his people, the prince of the power of the air, the Devil.—Others, with more propriety, observe that our blessed Lord perceived that Satan was at work by means of Peter, and was in fact approaching him with a temptation through the agency of the Apostle;—that he had taken advantage of Peter's ignorance of the real nature and tendency of his advice, or of his vanity and love of earthly prosperity and dominion, and had employed him as an instrument to suggest the unholy thought of shrinking from the task of suffering which had been appointed for the Redeemer by the will of the Father;—and that our Saviour, in his reply, addressed himself directly to the invisible demon, rejecting his impious counsel with abhorrence, just as he gave him his final reproof and dismissal in the wilderness, chap. iv. 10. —Or we may regard this rebuke as addressed solely to Peter, and implying that he was imitating the great adversary, and serving his interests, by giving counsel against suffering and submission; that being precisely the nature of the temptation with which Satan made his attack in

the wilderness. And so we may paraphrase the words of our Saviour's reply (with Baxter) in the following manner,—‘I say to thee, as I said to the Devil when he tempted me, get thee behind me; for thou doest the work of Satan the adversary, in tempting me, for self-preservation, to violate my Father's command and my undertaking, and to forsake the work of man's redemption and salvation.’

Again, How are we to understand the last verse, in which our Saviour says, ‘There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom?’—Some suppose that our Saviour here refers to the publication of the Gospel after his ascension and the day of Pentecost, when his spiritual kingdom began to be set up in the world, by the accession of believers to the church. But we may observe that the promise is, not so much concerning the coming of the kingdom of Christ, as concerning the coming of Christ himself in his kingdom; and not only so, but, if this had been the sense of our Saviour's declaration, it would have been applicable to all the Apostles (except Judas), and probably to almost all the bystanders, not merely to some of them.—Others understand by ‘the Son of man coming in his kingdom’ the overthrow of Jerusalem,—which was a remarkable display of Christ's power and the truth of his predictions,—the removal of an obstacle to the progress of the Gospel,—and a remarkable type of the awful day of judgment.

And this event was witnessed by only a few of those who were present when our Lord delivered the address here recorded.—But there is a fact which points to another, and perhaps a better, interpretation of this passage. In all the gospels in which this prediction is recorded, it is immediately followed by the narrative of our Lord's transfiguration in presence of three of his apostles; and hence it has been concluded, with strong reason, that this is the event to which the promise refers. The transfiguration was an actual and visible display of our Lord's kingly majesty and power,—and it is probable that he appeared, on that occasion, to *some* of his disciples, in the same glorious form which he will hereafter wear when he will come with clouds, “and every eye shall see him.” In the twenty-seventh verse our Saviour makes a solemn declaration of his future coming to judgment; and then, in the next verse, that he would ever give a view of himself, as he will appear under these circumstances of awful glory, to some persons present, during their life-time.

READER. From that time Jesus began to show unto his disciples.—Observe the union of tenderness and wisdom which was displayed in the teaching of our blessed Lord. When his disciples had become fully convinced of his being the Messiah, and were prepared to unite in that confession of which we have just

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 21—28.

read, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,'—then did their gracious master impart to them some intimations of his future sufferings, and of the difficulties which they must themselves be prepared to encounter. But even then they were not able to endure a full view of all these sufferings and difficulties; and it is said that Jesus only *began to shew* them: he gave them light and knowledge as they were able to bear it. Let us rest satisfied that the truths revealed in Scripture are set forth to us in due manner and proportion,—such as is best adapted to our state and circumstances. Doubtless, the more we study the sacred record with humble and pious minds, the greater will be the amount of truth imparted to us; but if there be limits to the knowledge which even the most devout and learned can derive from this sacred source, let it be remembered that the author of the inspired volume has consulted our best interests as well in the measure, as in the kind and substance, of the truths which he has been pleased to place within our reach.

He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things.—How can we rightly understand the force of that word *must*! It was a necessity laid upon him by his own holy will, his love for fallen man, his faithfulness to his gracious undertaking on our behalf. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer." "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"—*And suffer many things.* The sufferings of our blessed

Lord were not confined to the awful scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary. Far from it. He "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself" throughout the whole period of his ministry, not to mention other sources of pain and sorrow to which he graciously submitted. How large is the amount of "the unknown sufferings" of Christ none can tell. It pleased the Father to bruise him and to put him to grief; and in "bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." May the good pleasure of the Lord—with respect to ourselves prosper in his hands.—But who were they from whom the Lord of life and glory received, for the most part, this unworthy treatment? They were

The elders and chief priests and scribes, the very men who ought to have been foremost in receiving him with honour,—and who would have given him this welcome if they had been faithful to their religious light and privileges. But, as Quesnel truly observes in his note on this passage, Christ is usually persecuted by three classes of men, whose types or patterns may be found in the elders, the chief-priests, and the scribes,—namely, by "rich men, who have their portion in this life; ambitious and covetous ecclesiastics, who seek their portion in this life; and conceited scholars, who set up their wisdom against the wisdom of God, being more intent on criticising words than in providing for the salvation of their souls."—Holy Scripture is a faithful record of the wickedness of man and the evil of sin, as well as of the goodness and

mercy of God. How many times while reading it do we feel ourselves constrained to pray, "From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, Good Lord deliver us!" It is better to be quickened to such prayers for ourselves, than to indulge in a self-complacent or censorious spirit, when we read of the doings of the elders, and chief-priests, and scribes.

Then Peter took him,—caught up his words and took him to task,—*and began to rebuke him*. Evil counsel is sometimes conveyed to us by the agency of our best friends. We should consider not only who gives us advice, but what is the advice given,—how far it is consistent with the known will of God concerning us.

The weakness and disgrace of Peter on this occasion, recorded immediately after our Saviour's declaration in his favour, appears as if designed by the Holy Spirit to serve as a corrective and refutation of the extravagant honour assigned to him by unscriptural ages and sections of the church. Let us beware of giving to men any share of that honour, or ascribing to them any measure of that authority, which belongs only to Christ himself. The words of St. Peter were plausible; we find him

Saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.—Perhaps this was the dictate of ignorance, combined with a sincere affection for his master; perhaps it was, more or less, the expression of his own self-love, and a desire to share with Christ in temporal prosperity and glory;

—and it is more than possible that an evil agent was working upon this ignorance, or self-love, or both,—and was beginning to employ Peter in presenting some powerful temptation to the blessed Jesus, with a view to divert him, if possible from his great and glorious work.—Some there are who say to Christ, in his Gospel, the same thing, in effect, as that which St. Peter said to him in person. They will not believe that Christ saves men by his death and sufferings; that the innocent Jesus became a substitute for the guilty;—that his death was, in the true sense of the expression, a sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. They say, That be far from thee, Lord! But let us rather say "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!" "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"—Observe the manner in which Jesus received the Apostle's observation;

He turned and said unto Peter, get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me. We may learn, from our Saviour's example on this occasion, that no regard for men's persons should induce us to deceive or flatter them by giving a false and smooth name to their sins, or by withholding faithful rebuke when their conduct deserves it.—But what was the advice which our Lord thus indignantly rejected? It was counsel to spare himself. He would not for a moment listen to such proposal, or entertain such a thought. He was too earnestly intent upon the great work of man's redemption,—

ST. MATTHEW XVI. 21—28.

too zealously desirous of fulfilling the task which had been assigned to him,—too hearty in his concurrence with the will of the Father, to be induced even to listen to a word of contrary tendency. How great and persevering was the Redeemer's love! How clear his perception of the value of men's souls, and of the blessings of redemption!

Then said Jesus unto his disciples,—with a view to correct their self-will, and desire of self-indulgence and self-exaltation,—If any man will i. e. be willing to come after me,—to be, and to be regarded as my true disciple and follower,—let him deny himself.—We must not set up or obey our own will and pleasure in opposition to God's will, or even without reference to it, but, on the contrary, obey his will in preference to our own, consult his demands, rather than our own pleasure, and submit to the teaching of his wisdom rather than lean to our own understanding.—And take up his cross. We must patiently submit to those sufferings which God in his providence may lay upon us, and endure in the spirit of meekness whatever may be contrary to our own inclinations or desires;—not, indeed, make the cross for ourselves, but take it up—bear it—with humility and patience, when it is prepared for us,—and this not only in case of the more great and grievous calamities to which we may be exposed, but with regard to the daily vexations, burdens, and provocations of common life.—And follow me. It is a great encourage-

ment to contemplate the blessed Redeemer going before us in the way of duty and of suffering. Let us cheerfully resolve, in dependence upon divine grace, to “take his easy yoke and light burden upon us, to follow him in lowliness, patience, and charity, and be ordered by the governance of his Holy Spirit; seeking always his glory, and serving him daily in our vocation with thanksgiving.”

For whosoever will save his life, whosoever is so bent upon the possession and enjoyment of things present and temporal, upon the safety and gratification of self, as to be ready to sacrifice every other consideration to this object—shall lose it, he will fail to attain the very end which he has so anxiously in view, namely, his own happiness and welfare. Our happiness is really to be found in God alone, through Christ; to him we must go, for he only has the words of eternal life. And whosoever will lose his life for my sake,—whoever regards the will of his God and Saviour as supreme, and is ready to treat every thing as subordinate to the obtaining of his favour, renouncing, if need be, even his apparent interest and present gratification, rather than violate a command, or neglect plain and positive duty,—shall find it,—this man shall indeed obtain a “blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”—How powerful an argument to constrain us to the holy love of God, and devoted obedience to his blessed

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 1—13.

will! *For*, as our blessed Lord emphatically asks, *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* We should say that a man would be no gainer who should lose his life in endeavouring to obtain the necessaries or comforts of his earthly existence. But how much worse will be the condition of him, who shall forfeit his everlasting happiness and well-being in consequence of his love and pursuit of inferior things! Eternal woe in return for momentary pleasure,—who can describe the folly of this exchange, or the loss incurred by those who shall have made it!—It seems impossible to do more than repeat these solemn words of the great friend and Saviour of our souls without weakening their force. Let them sink deeply into our hearts; and may their sanctifying influence be present with us whenever we may be tempted to set our affections on things below, or to turn aside from the path of holy and devoted obedience into the ways of vanity and sin. And, in order that the consideration thus suggested to our minds may have something like its due right, let us not fail to connect with it the remembrance of that great day which will fix our eternal state, — will effectually declare our wisdom or our folly, our gain or our loss,—and will decide our happiness or misery for ever. *For the Son of Man* the once suffering but now glorified Jesus, “*shall come in the glory of his*

Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”

HYMN.

Thou Judge of quick and dead,
Before whose awful bar,
With holy joy or guilty dread,
We all must soon appear!
Our souls by grace prepare
For that tremendous day,
And fill us now with watchful care,
And stir us up to pray;—

To pray and wait the hour,
That awful hour unknown,
When rob'd in majesty and power,
Thou shalt from heaven come down;
The immortal Son of Man,
To judge the human race,
With all the Father's dazzling train,
With all thy glorious grace.

Oh! may we still be found
Obedient to thy word,
And waiting for the trumpet's sound
Which marks thy coming, Lord!
Do thou through grace ensure
Our lot among the bless'd,
That, found in thee, we may secure
Thine everlasting rest.

WESLEY.

§ LVI.

CHAP. XVII. 1—13.

The Transfiguration of Christ.

AND “after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appear-

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 1—13.

ed unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 'While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, 'This is my beloved Son, 'in whom I am well pleased; 'hear ye him.

6 'And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and 'touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, ^AJesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, 'Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

11 And Jesus answered and said, Elias truly shall first come, and 'restore all things.

12 'But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but ^m have done

unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise "shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13 'Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

a Mark ix. 2. Luke ix. 28.—b 2 Pet. i. 17.—c ch. iii. 17. Mark i. 11. Luke iii. 22.—d Is. xlii. 1.—e Deut. xviii. 15. 19. Acts. iii. 22, 23.—f 2 Pet. i. 18.—g Dan. viii. 18; & ix. 21; & x. 10, 13.—h ch. xvi. 20. Mark viii. 30; ix. 9. i Mal. iv. 5. ch. xi. 14. Mark 9. 11. A Mal. iv. 6. Luke i. 16, 17; Acts iii. 21.—j ch. xi. 14. Mark ix. 12. 13.—m ch. xiv. 3. 10.—n ch. xvi. 21.—o ch. xi. 14.

Reader. We have here an account of one of the most remarkable of the circumstances connected with our Saviour's eventful history, —a circumstance in every way capable of exciting our lively interest, and of making a deep impression upon our memories and hearts. The same narrative (in substance), is found in Mark ix. 2—10, and Luke ix. 28—36.

You can have little difficulty in understanding the terms in which this history is conveyed; although neither your ideas, nor any explanation which I may give, can equal the majesty and glory of the scene described. There are, however, one or two particulars to which I will call your attention, before we proceed to a consideration of the practical and devotional lessons to be derived from this passage of the sacred record.

St. Matthew and St. Mark fix the date of this event at six days after the foregoing; but St. Luke speaks of it as having taken place "about an eight days" after. There is no real difference in this note of time;—six being the number of clear days intervening, and eight

including the two on which the several events occurred.

The sacred narrative does not give us any information respecting the precise locality of this transaction. Some suppose that the "high mountain" was Mount Tabor; others think that more probably it was Mount Hermon; but nothing has been made known to us on this head, and therefore we may rest satisfied that there is nothing which it is needful for us to know. Contented ignorance, in which Scripture leaves us, is far better than vain knowledge, which tradition is always ready to supply.

The prophecy of Malachi concerning the coming of Elijah is here expounded as having received its fulfilment in the ministry of John the Baptist;—who came in "the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke i. 17.) By his 'restoring all things' is meant his effecting a general reformation, and preparing the people for the coming of Christ. This he did, as far as the execution of his office was concerned; but if the reformation and preparation was not universally and effectually made, that was the fault of the unbelieving and impenitent Jews who did not properly attend to his preaching. Scripture often speaks of a thing as done, when God designs it, and orders his dispensations for the accomplishment of it, although, in point of fact, the event never takes place. "Elias shall first come, and shall restore all things." That was punctually fulfilled: Elias did come, and, so far as in him lay, did restore

all things. And yet all things were not restored. Why not? Not because Elias was wanting on his part, but because the Jews were wanting on theirs. Thus also St. Paul says, (Rom. viii. 30,) Whom God called, them he justified,—and glorified; and yet many have been called, who will not be eventually glorified. Why not? Not because God is wanting on his part, for he has arranged his dispensations in accordance with his declared design, and he has done his part in bringing these men to glory. But they have been wanting on their part; and therefore they come short of the glory which has been prepared for them. This mode of speech is frequent in Scripture, and should be carefully considered:—a word describing the performance of an act is used to denote the design and operation of an agent, expressing strongly the certainty of that design, and the reality of that operation, but not necessarily implying that the design is fulfilled, or that the operation takes effect. Elias restored all things; and yet all things were not restored. God glorified certain men; and yet they were not glorified. Through faith you are saved; and yet through unbelief you may be lost.

READER. Jesus taketh Peter and James and John his brother.—

It pleased our blessed Lord to choose these three disciples as witnesses of his extraordinary glory

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 1—18.

or sufferings on more occasions than one. Perhaps there was something in their condition, or character, or their future employment in the church, which formed the ground of this choice; but this is not a point which we are concerned to ascertain, and it is sufficient for us to resolve the fact into the wisdom and will of the Saviour. These disciples were present, when others were excluded, at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark v. 37); and they were the selected witnesses of our Saviour's agony in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 33.) Was it not one proof of the wisdom and goodness of their divine master, that they were prepared for the more humiliating and painful scene, by a peculiar exhibition of his power and glory previously displayed? And have we not abundant reason to hope, if we are the true disciples of Christ, that "as our day so shall our strength be;"—that if heavy trials are before us, the Lord will mercifully prepare us for them, and support us under their pressure?—*And bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.*—It is the privilege of all Christ's disciples, to retire and to ascend spiritually, in the company of their Lord and Master.—This event, as was likely, made a deep impression on the minds of the favoured disciples; it is mentioned by St. John in his Gospel, chap. i. 14; and by St. Peter in his second epistle, chap. i. 16, 17. Let us thankfully remember spiritual favours, and devoutly meditate upon those manifestations of a Saviour's glory which

have been vouchsafed to ourselves.

And was transfigured before them.

—The Lord Jesus had condescended to shroud and conceal his divine glory beneath the veil of human nature; but he was now pleased to cause the divinity to shine through that veil, and to cover it with heavenly splendour. Doubtless, the radiant form which he now assumed was, in some respects, if not entirely, the same as that glorious body which he now wears, and to which the bodies of his saints will be, in their measure, conformed after the resurrection. See 1 John iii. 2.—We are not to expect, during our earthly pilgrimage, any display of the Redeemer's glory, such as that which is here recorded; but let us remember that the prayer of the gospel exhibits that glory which is of the deepest importance to us, and that we are invited, at once for our comfort and our benefit, to behold there the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And in the transfiguration of our blessed Saviour on the mount we may behold a striking image of the transformation of our own minds by the power of the Holy Spirit now, as well as a pattern of the glorification of our whole nature hereafter. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds," says the apostle,—and the word "transformed" in the original is the same as that which is rendered "transfigured" in the verse before us. May we, by divine grace, be thus transformed more and more into the likeness of our adorable Redeemer,—"changed into the same

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 1—13.

image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God.”

And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.—Moses and Elijah, two eminent servants of God,—the history of whose lives, in several passages, bears a remarkable likeness to that of our blessed Lord himself,—appear now as the companions of Christ in glory; reminding us that they who cheerfully endure labour, suffering, and reproach for his sake, will be abundantly rewarded, and made more than conquerors through him that loved them.—Here is a most encouraging earnest of the honour which will hereafter be put upon even the bodies of Christ’s believing people. It may be remembered that the body of Moses was not found after his death; and that Elijah was translated without dying. But the bodies, as well as the souls, of both were in the hands of God; and here we have a proof that God can give the same glory to those who die, and to those who do not die, before the coming of their Lord.—In Moses and Elias we see a representation of the Law and the Prophets waiting upon Christ, and doing him homage. The institutions of the Law, and the predictions of the Prophets, pointed to him, and received their accomplishment in his person and his work. It is in talking with Christ, and talking of him, that they are supremely entitled to our regard. They talked with him on this occasion, as St. Luke informs us, concerning his decease which he should accomplish at Jeru-

salem; doubtless in a very different strain from that which had lately been adopted by St. Peter on the same subject,—and perhaps encouraging the man Christ Jesus, and strengthening him, in that holy resolution which he had expressed in reply to the apostle’s offensive observation. It was thus also that, after the temptation in the wilderness, angels came and ministered unto him. This decease was indeed the great “accomplishment” or fulfilment of Jewish types and prophecies. See Luke xxiv. 44—48.—Observe, in the company present on the mount, as described in this short verse, a beautiful picture or compendium of the universal church in its head and members;—Christ himself,—his glorified saints,—and his believing disciples upon earth;—the church under the Law and the church under the Gospel;—the church militant, and the church triumphant.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus,—not unto the saints, even though visibly present,—not imagining that he required their mediation, although Christ was revealed in glory before him,—but, with the simple confidence of true Christian faith, addressing Jesus himself;—and hereby reminding us that prayer ascends to the throne of grace as directly from the heart of a believer on earth as from that of a saint in glory—*Lord, it is good for us to be here.* It is indeed good for us to be wherever Christ is pleased to reveal himself in his majesty and goodness,—in the assemblies of his people

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 1—13.

on his own holy day,—in the appointed act of solemn commemoration at his holy table—in the study of his word,—in retirement, meditation, and prayer.—*If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, &c.*—But such was not the will of Christ; and Peter knew not what he said when he made this proposal. Christ himself, as man and mediator, had yet to be made perfect through sufferings; and the apostles were to be partakers of those sufferings.—Let us say, in the spirit of meek submission to the will of God “all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.”—It is not intended that we should pitch our tents even upon the mount of religious ordinances, while we are here on earth. But the day is coming in which it will be said, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.”

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them,—a cloud or body of light, the well known symbol of the divine presence, spread itself over them and around them—“the excellent glory.” We read of some dark clouds in which God appeared during the former dispensation;—but in this mass of pure refulgence we find an apt emblem of gospel light, and liberty, and joy.—*And behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said,* in confirmation of that which had already been declared at our Saviour’s baptism, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,*—or, according to the force of the term in the original, *In whom I have been and still am well pleased.*—This is He in whom I took pleasure while

the Law and the Prophets were in force, and in whom I delight now that their office is at an end. *Hear ye him.* How solemn a recognition of the authority of the Son as superior to that of the servants! May we have grace to hear him speaking to us in his word, by his providence, in our conscience,—and by his Spirit through whatever medium he may be pleased to employ.—See Deut. xviii. 15, 19.

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and were sore afraid.

—This was the case with the prophet Daniel (see Dan. x. 4—9,) and with St. John again upon a subsequent occasion, (Rev. i. 17.) How can weak and sinful man be admitted to the presence of God and live? Consider the Mediator;—*Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise and be not afraid.* Neither his own glory, nor the glory of the Father, is really formidable to his believing people.

—“Hear ye him,” said the voice from the excellent glory; and what was the first word which his disciples afterwards heard from his gracious lips? It was a word of comfort and encouragement! Be not afraid.—Christ is compassionate, not only in his humiliation, but also in his state of exaltation. How delightful to witness this exercise of tender kindness towards his disciples, in connection with so bright a manifestation of his glory! It was even on the mount of transfiguration, that he approached his trembling disciples,—and touched them—just as he had touched many of the afflicted sons of men while he was walking about the earth in his more lowly form,—and said, *Arise,*

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 14—27.

and be not afraid. See Luke i. 74, 75.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

—But his presence was abundantly sufficient to compensate for the loss of all besides. He will “never leave nor forsake” his believing people. Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. A striking instance of the neglect and abuse of the means of grace! It is indeed an awful thing to do what we list to the messages and messengers of God, instead of suffering them to work upon us that which God wills and for which he sends them. That which God wills tends to our sanctification and happiness; when our will prevails against his, our ruin is complete. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” See also 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.—*Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them*—Even the Son himself was cast out of the Jewish vineyard by the wicked husbandmen. God has now given—let out—that vineyard to other husbandmen. May we render him the fruits of the vineyard in due season!

HYMN.

Away ye dreams of mortal joy!
Raptures divine my thoughts employ;
I see the king of glory shine,
And feel his love and call him mine!

Thus on the mount his servant viewed
His lustre, when transformed he stood;
And bidding earthly scenes farewell,
Cried “Lord, ’tis pleasant here to dwell.”

Yet still our elevated eyes
To nobler visions long to rise;
That great assembly would we join
When all thy saints around thee shine!

That mount how bright; those forms how fair!

’Tis good to dwell for ever there!
Come death the envoy of my God,
And bear me to that blest abode!

DODDRIDGE.

§ LVII.

CHAP. XVII. 14—27.

Christ healeth the lunatic; foretelleth his own passion, and payeth tribute.

14 ¶ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 14—27.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out ?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief ; for verily I say unto you, 'If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

22 ¶ And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men :

23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received 'tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute ?

25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon ? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute ? of their own children, or of strangers ?

26 Peter said unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto

him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find 'a piece of money : that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

¶ Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37.—q ch. xxi. 21. Mark xi. 25. Luke xvii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 9 ; & xiii. 2.—r ch. xvi. 21. & xx. 17. Mark viii. 31 ; & ix. 30. 31 ; & x. 33. Luke ix. 22. 44 ; & xviii. 31 ; & xxiv. 6. 7.—s Mark ix. 33.—| Called in the original, *didrachma*, being in value fifteen-pence : See Ex. xxx. 13 ; & xxxviii. 26.—| Or, a *stater*. It is half an ounce of silver, in value 2s. 6d. after 5s. the ounce.

Reader.—The narrative of the healing of the lunatic,—a youth troubled with epileptic fits under the influence of demoniacal possession,—is recorded by St. Mark (ix. 14—29) and St. Luke (ix. 37—43), with the addition of a few particulars not mentioned by St. Matthew. This case of disease was one of peculiar obstinacy and extent ; the child had been afflicted from his birth ; and he was deaf and dumb, besides being subject to those violent attacks by which his life was endangered, and which were in every respect truly distressing to his friends. During the absence of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, this child was brought to his disciples for a cure ; but it appears that they were alarmed at the grievous nature of the malady, and hastily concluded that it was beyond the reach of remedy. They doubted, if not concerning the power of God, yet concerning the extent of their Lord's promise and commission

to themselves for the healing of diseases; and therefore they were unable to cure the afflicted youth. They did not receive the power for which they did not seek in faith.—The scribes entered into a dispute with the disciples during our Saviour's absence, and attempted to entrap them by their subtleties. Perhaps they had succeeded in unsettling their minds, or in weakening their faith, to a certain extent, before the father made application on behalf of his son; and this may have been the immediate origin of that unbelief which was the cause of their failure.

We cannot infer, from the promise of our Lord in verse 20, that every person who has saving faith has, or ought to have, also the power of working miracles. Faith, as you well know, has relation to a promise. Now the apostles had received from their master a distinct personal commission to cast out devils and perform other miracles of healing, with a promise of power to enable them to do so. This was the promise on which they were required to rely; a want of confidence in it, and in him who had given it, was that unbelief of which our Saviour complained; and the exercise of this confidence was that faith which would enable them to remove mountains. Unless, therefore, such a promise be made to ourselves individually, we cannot possibly have such faith. We may, and ought to, have faith in the promise of forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, and of all other blessings included in the Christian covenant; and through this faith we shall obtain salvation, and all covenant

blessings. But we cannot expect that this faith will impart to us the power of healing diseases or working any other miracles, just because such power is not included in the promises of the covenant. An attempt to perform miracles, on our part, would not be a work of faith, but an act of presumption.—“To remove mountains,” was a proverbial expression among the Jews denoting the performance of some great and extraordinary work, in removing formidable obstructions, or overcoming difficulties apparently insuperable. It is evident that the faith which could remove mountains (or work miracles) is quite distinct from saving faith, or faith which worketh by love, because St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, “though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing.”

The tribute mentioned in verse 24, was not any of the Roman taxes or imposts, but was the annual payment exacted from the Jews by the Mosaic Law for the use of the temple service, consisting of half a shekel from each male above twenty years of age, paid on occasion of the numbering of the people (Exod. xxx. 11—16). It was, in fact, the Jewish church-rate, imposed by divine authority, as a part of the ceremonial law; “a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls.”—The “tribute money” here spoken of was the double drachma (which is the word in the original), equal in value to the half shekel, i. e. about fifteen pence of our money. And the “piece of money” found in

the mouth of the fish, was the stater, (also expressed in the original),—a coin equal in value to four drachmæ, or about half a crown; which was the sum required to pay the tribute for two persons, namely for our Lord and St Peter.—In the performance of this miracle our Saviour displayed not only his Omniscience, but also his Omnipotent command of all creation. He not only knew where the stater was; but he caused it to come into the fish's mouth, and he caused the fish to come to the apostle's hook. Here we see the Son of man as the Lord of "whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas," Ps. viii. 8.—In verse 25, "Jesus prevented him" means "Jesus was beforehand with him; Jesus spoke first." Then "Prevent us in all our doings" means "go before us; prepare the way."

READER. *When they were come to the multitude.*—Here the scribes were captiously disputing with the apostles;—probably triumphing in their want of success in the case of the demoniac, occasioned by that very unbelief which they had perhaps themselves induced;—and denying even the power and authority of Jesus himself. Doubtless the apostles were in a state of great perplexity;—and so shall we be if we yield to unbelieving suggestions, and disturbing doubts. How much for our happiness is it to reflect, that if we are the sincere disciples of Christ, our Master is at hand, and will come and help us!—On this occasion, the Lord Jesus Christ, when

he rejoined his disciples, brought with him a demonstration of his power; for

There came to him a certain man—wisely abandoning all other means of help, forsaking even the poor timid disciples themselves, he repaired to Christ as his only and all-sufficient helper in the time of need,—kneeling down to him, and saying, with equal humility, faith, and fervour, Lord, have mercy on my son. Thus the woman of Canaan came to our Lord on behalf of her daughter; and herein parents and others may find abundant encouragement, and admonition, to repair to the throne of grace in prayer on behalf of those whom they love, as well as for themselves. *For he is lunatic and sore vexed.* It is our privilege to recount our griefs, and to declare our necessities, before the Lord, in the full assurance that no affliction can be so great as to be beyond the reach of his power and goodness. There must be a strong sense of need at the foundation of earnest prayer. The soul that does not know and feel its misery is dumb before the God of grace and consolation. *For oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.* How many and various are the natural dangers which surround us, from the influence of which we are preserved by that one blessing, health,—the continuance of our bodily powers and the faculties of our minds, by the continual support and goodness of Divine providence!—How many, too, and how various are the spiritual mischiefs which Satan is continually seeking to bring upon our souls! Sometimes he would cast us

into the fire, sometimes into the water;—now into one sin, and then into another of the very opposite kind;—at one time into the fire of earthly passions, or rash presumption, or unholy zeal, at another into the water of sloth, or unhallowed despondency, or coldness, formality, and spiritual death.

And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. If we bring our sinful souls, for counsel or for health, to the servants of Christ, and neglect the Saviour himself, our application will be made in vain. If we look to the church for blessings which can be derived only from the head of the church, we shall be sadly disappointed. It is a part of Satan's policy, not only to injure the souls of men, but to delude them by leading them to apply to fictitious or inadequate sources of remedy. Alas, how many have gone to popes and priests for pardon of their sins;—a blessing which popes and priests can never give! How many have trusted to the services of the church, for that spiritual strength and succour which can be derived only from Christ himself through a personal and lively faith!

O faithless and perverse generation!—A rebuke which applied, in its measure, not only to the cavilling scribes and ignorant multitude, but also to the weak and wavering disciples. Christ sees sin in his own people; he reproveth them for it, and will cause them to suffer for it if it be retained. Let all believers say, with the father of the lunatic, as his address is recorded by St. Mark, "Lord,

I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" This is indeed a wise and suitable reply, from the heart of man, to that word of encouragement and promise, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."—Let us ever implore the help of God to enable us to overcome the remainder of unbelief.

And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him.—The Lord Jesus said, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him and enter no more into him." So may the Saviour, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, rebuke every evil passion, desire, or propensity within ourselves, and work for us a complete and eternal deliverance from their malignant influence! "And the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him." It may cost us many a pang, and much trouble, to let go our sins and corruptions; but how great will be our gain, if withal the tormentor and defiler be cast out! "And he was as one dead; inasmuch that many said he is dead." Men are apt to mistake the nature and effects of real conversion. When a poor child of Adam becomes truly religious, they are disposed to regard him as lost to society and to himself, —and as good as dead. He is "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And of this spiritual resurrection, as well as of this death unto sin, we have a beautiful image in the transaction before us, as the narrative is continued by St. Mark; for it is added that "Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose." May

ST. MATTHEW XVII. 14—27.

his friend, his helper and restorer, be our own! See Ps. ix. 13, 14. Col. iii. 3.

Why could not we cast him out?—Because of your unbelief.—Let us learn a lesson for ourselves from the failure of the disciples in this memorable instance. They did not work a miracle, because they had not sufficient faith in that promise which bore directly upon the case, and in Him who could have imparted to them sufficient power, and have given fulfilment to his own word. And we, in like manner, shall be unable to subdue our spiritual enemies, to work righteousness, to lead a holy life, and to enjoy the comforts and blessings of true religion, unless we place a simple reliance on the promises made to ourselves in the Gospel of Christ, and according to the covenant of grace. See 1 John v. 4. Unbelief paralyzes the soul; faith is the great means of vitality and strength. Unbelief shuts out God; faith receives him, and works by his imparted influence. Real faith, like a grain of mustard seed,—small in substance, but yet endued with a principle of vitality, and marked by continual growth and increase,—will enable us to remove mountains,—to overcome difficulties, and to surmount obstacles, in the way of our salvation and happiness, which must otherwise be insuperable and fatal.—Let us cherish this animating and invigorating temper,—a simple dependence upon God our Saviour, and reliance on the word of his promise concerning ourselves.—And, remembering that admonition, *this kind goeth not out but by prayer*

and fasting, let us not fail to make use of all suitable means, as occasion may require, for the obtaining of that gift of God, and its perpetual increase within our souls.

When they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? He saith, Yes.—Peter well knew that it became his blessed Master to fulfil all righteousness; and that he was ready to comply with that divine institution, the payment of the half shekel for the use of the temple service.—Let us not forget that “tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, honour to whom honour,” is one of the clear and standing laws of Christianity. It is undoubtedly a believer’s duty to pay all existing rates and taxes, imposed by lawful authority. If we feel ourselves aggrieved by the existence of any impost, we may use our endeavours, by proper and constitutional means, to obtain its remission. But, as long as it lasts, we must pay it, or sin against God.

Our blessed Lord now took occasion to intimate the exalted relation in which he stood to the temple and its services. He was not, as Moses, a servant in the house; but he was a Son over his own house. And on this ground he might have claimed exemption from the payment of the tribute. *Then are the children free.*—But he forbore to claim the honour due to himself, on this occasion; as he had already made still greater sacrifices, and was prepared to submit to a still deeper humiliation. Let us adore his condescension and

his love! And let us learn also, from that part of his example which is now before us, not to be too eager in insisting on the exercise of our privileges or our rights, especially when those rights are not clearly understood by those around us, or when we may run the risk of giving needless offence.—See Rom. xiv. 15.

The miracle which our Saviour wrought at this time, while it furnishes one proof, amongst many, of his divine knowledge and power, is adapted to encourage us in a faithful reliance on Providence for the supply of our need, while we continue in the way of duty. He who could bring a fish, with the needful coin, to Peter's hook, can never be at a loss for means to supply all the wants, whether bodily or spiritual, of those who walk uprightly before him, and call on him with faith and prayer. He can lay all nature, and any part of it, under tribute for their support and comfort. See Matt. vi. 25—34.

HYMN.

Jesus, our souls' delightful choice,
In thee believing we rejoice;
Yet still our joy is mix'd with grief,
While faith contends with unbelief.

Thy promises our hearts revive,
And keep our fainting hopes alive;
But guilt and fear and sorrows rise
And hide the promise from our eyes.

Oh, let not sin and Satan boast
While saints lie mourning in the dust;
Nor see that faith to ruin brought
Which thy own gracious hand hath wrought.

Do thou the dying spark inflame;
Reveal the glories of thy name;
And put all anxious doubts to flight,
As shades disperse by opening light.

DODDRIDGE.

§ LVIII.

CHAP. XVIII. 1—14.

Christ warneth his disciples to be humble and harmless, to avoid offences, and not to despise the little ones.

AT 'the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 'And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 'But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 ¶ Woe unto the world because of offences! for 'it must needs be that offences come; but 'woe to that man by whom *thé* offence cometh!

ST. MATTHEW XVIII. 1—14.

8 **Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.**

9 **And if thine eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.**

10 **Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always ^a behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.**

11 **For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.**

12 **"How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?**

13 **And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.**

14 **Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.**

^a Mark ix. 38. Luke ix. 48; & xii. 24.—^b Pa. cxxxi. 2. ch. xix. 14. Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 2.—^c ch. xx. 27; & xviii. 11.—^d ch. x. 42. Luke ix. 48.—^e Mark ix. 42. Luke xvii. i. 2.—^f Luke xvii. 1. 1 Cor. xi. 19.—^g ch. xxvi. 24.—^h ch. v. 29. 30. Mark ix. 43. 45.—ⁱ Pa. xxxiv. 7. Zech. xiii. 7. Heb. i. 14.—^j Fath. i. 14. Luke i. 19.—^k Luke ix. 56; & xix. 10. John iii. 17; & xii. 47.—^m Luke xv. 4.

Reader.—We have here an account of our Saviour's instructions to his disciples on the occasion of a very unbecoming contest which had arisen among them concerning precedency, or the question who should be first and greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Perhaps they did not venture to propose this question to their master; but it was one which appears to have been warmly debated among themselves. The narrative is given at length by St. Mark (ix. 38—41), and more briefly by St. Luke (ix. 46—50). St. Mark says expressly that Jesus "came to Capernaum; and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace, for by the way they disputed among themselves who should be the greatest." And St. Luke also tells us that our Lord spoke to them on the subject, "perceiving the thought of their heart." Hence it appears that while this controversy existed among themselves they were yet ashamed, as they well might be, to bring it before their master. And when St. Matthew wrote "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus saying," he probably meant to place the transaction in precisely the same light, leaving his reader to understand "saying among themselves," not, "saying unto Jesus." They came unto Jesus; and (as they came) they were saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

ST. MATTHEW XVIII. 1—14.

The existence of such a dispute as this makes it evident that the disciples did not yet rightly understand the nature of Christ's kingdom. They were still fixing their minds and hearts upon some temporal dominion, attended with outward pomp and worldly power; and were not sufficiently alive to the fact that the reign of the Messiah would be distinguished by righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Such is the power of prejudice! so slow is the heart of man to detach itself from worldly things, and to apprehend things spiritual and heavenly!

There is, however, one fact, of some importance to ourselves, which may be inferred from this unhappy and disgraceful dispute. It is clear from the circumstance before us, that no precedency had been yet granted to any one of the Apostles; and that the words lately addressed by our Lord to St. Peter in particular were not intended, or understood, as conveying to him any priority or rule over his brethren. How could the disciples have disputed among themselves who should be the greatest, if the question had already been decided by the highest authority in favour of St. Peter? The very existence of this debate proves that no preeminent power or dignity was granted to St. Peter by those words which had already been addressed to him, *Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church.*—And, more than this, the answer which our Lord gave to the question makes it appear not only that he had not yet given any precedence

to either of his apostles, but that he did not intend to do so at any future time. If he had designed to make St. Peter the prince of the Apostles, an opportunity was now given for conferring this dignity upon him;—or rather, our Lord would have been compelled, in fairness and honesty of speech, to set the controversy at rest by declaring the truth of his intention! But no such declaration was drawn forth, just because no such design was ever formed.

In the ancient church there was an unfounded tradition that the little child, whom our Lord called to him and placed in the midst of his disciples on this occasion, was Ignatius, afterwards bishop of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom about the year 107. The story, being without sufficient proof, is worth nothing; but doubtless it had its meaning and use when it was first propagated. The name of Ignatius was unfairly used, in the early centuries, for the purpose of exalting the power and influence of the hierarchy. Forged epistles, attributed to this holy man, were published, containing extravagant and unscriptural views of the office and claims of Christian Ministers, and tending to support the rising ecclesiastical system; and it is probable that fabulous tradition was employed with a view to give weight and dignity to the name of this supposed champion of an ambitious and grasping priesthood. If we value the simple truth of Scripture, we must be on our guard against tradition, even

ST. MATTHEW XVIII. 1—14.

when its stories may appear, at first sight, to be merely amusing and harmless.

I must make a few observations in explanation of our Lord's words in v. 10,—“I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven.” Observe, our Saviour is not here speaking merely of young children, but of his humble, meek, child-like disciples, of whatever age. He has been speaking of them from verse 5; where he said ‘whoso shall receive one such little child in my name,’ i. e. one who shall humble himself as the little child at that moment present,—one who is a child, not in years, but in heart and spirit,—humble, teachable, and mild. So then our Lord is here speaking of the angels of his faithful and humble disciples: and he declares, with allusion to the custom of earthly courts and palaces, where certain favourites and high officers are admitted into the royal presence, that these angels are always in the presence of God. But what is meant by “their angels?” I answer that perhaps it is too much to deduce from this expression the doctrine that each saint on earth has a guardian angel assigned to him; but that it is certainly necessary to regard this verse as coinciding with the general tenor of Scripture, by which we are given to understand that God vouchsafes to employ the ministry of angels for the benefit of his faithful and holy servants upon earth. The following judicious note of Burkitt

embraces perhaps all that can be safely and wisely said in explanation of this interesting verse. We may learn hence, says he, “first, what is the office and employment of the glorious angels; namely, to be the immediate attendants upon the royal person of the supreme King and Sovereign of the world:—and, secondly, in what esteem good men are with God, and what a mighty regard he has for the meanest of his children, that he commits the care and preservation of them to the holy angels, who are nearest to him and in highest favour and honour with him. It is Jerome's note upon this place, that great is the dignity of these little ones, seeing every one of them from his birth has an angel delegated to preserve him. But though others think that the opinion of a tutelary angel, or of one particular angel's having the custody of one particular saint as his continual charge, has not a sufficient foundation in the holy Scriptures; yet all the angels in heaven are ministering spirits unto them; and though they do not always attend upon their persons, for they stand before the face of God, yet it is to receive his commands either to help them in their exigencies, or to punish those that injure them.”

In verse 12, we shall perhaps keep more nearly to the sense of the original if we adopt the translation which has been sanctioned by Luther and others,—“Doth he not leave the ninety and nine upon the mountains, and goeth, and seeketh that which is gone astray?” The

sense is still the same; but the picture is perhaps more natural. The figure of a shepherd leaving his flock in search of a strayed sheep was familiar among the Jews, and was used to denote the exercise of great zeal and affection on the part of the destitute and lost.

READER. *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*—Needless, painful, and even sinful, inquiry,—if it relates to worldly preeminence, dignity, and power. Would that it had altogether disappeared from the church of Christ! But, alas, the fire of unholy ambition still burns in the midst of many churches, great and small. Still there are lordly claims, and factious oppositions, and wretched controversies upon this endless question, Who shall be the greatest? Who shall establish the strongest claims to power, who shall enjoy the largest share of it, who shall be the most undoubted and most absolute lord over God's heritage? But let it not be so with us. Let us rather entertain a question like this with reference to Christian temper, character, and practice. Let us consider what is the spirit—what is the conduct—which God loves best, and which he most delights to honour. And let us humbly resolve, in dependence on divine grace, that that which is most pleasing and precious in the sight of our heavenly Father shall be also most delightful and welcome to ourselves. Let us “covet earnestly the best gifts.”

Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Our Lord warned his apostles that they must cease to entertain those proud, domineering, and ambitious desires to which they had yielded, and must possess a more meek and peaceable temper, before they would be fit to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Their views respecting the office and reign of the Messiah needed to be reformed before they could even understand aright the nature of those blessings and dignities of which they seemed anxious to partake. Repeated conversions from various particular errors, evil tempers, or bad habits are needful in the progress of Christian sanctification. When occasions have led to the detection of any latent evil, or the development of any sinful propensity, then we are more especially called upon to seek the aid of divine grace in enabling us to correct what is amiss in us, and to give a new and holy bias to our depraved inclinations and desires.—In these words of our blessed Lord, we find also a general truth of great importance to us all. We must be converted from our naturally proud, self-willed, worldly state of mind and heart, and must become humble, teachable, and free from the enslaving influence of earthly desires. “Converting grace makes us like little children; not foolish as children (1 Cor. xiv. 20), nor fickle (Eph. iv. 14), nor playful, (ch. xi. 16); but, as children, we must desire the sincere milk of the word (1 Pet. ii. 2); as children, we must be careful for no-

ST. MATTHEW XVIII. 1—14.

thing, but leave it to our heavenly Father to care for us (ch. vi. 31); we must, as children, be harmless, and inoffensive, and void of malice (1 Cor. xiv. 20), governable, and under command (Gal. iv. 2); and, (which is here chiefly intended), we must be humble as little children." See Ps. 131. Matt. v. 3, 5.—The contrary temper unfits men for the presence of God, and the blessedness of heaven. "Whatever profession men make, yet if they allow themselves in pride and ambition, they will be rejected both from God's tabernacle, and from his holy hill. Pride threw the angels that sinned out of heaven; and will keep us out, if we be not converted from it." In the church and kingdom of the Redeemer, the deepest humility is the highest greatness, and the sure road to exalted happiness and honour. He who possesses the largest share of Christian lowliness, simplicity, and meekness, as he has most of the spirit of Christ, so he will also receive the greatest measure of the blessings which Christ bestows.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.—It is our duty, and, if we are Christ's faithful servants, it will be our delight, to look with kindness and hearty goodwill upon all those who bear the image of the meek and lowly Saviour. We must love them, and do them good, for his sake. Every humble, meek, child-like believer in Jesus, of whatever religious denomination, whether a member of our own church or of another, has a claim upon our Christian sympathy and love. We

offend grievously against the laws of the Gospel, if we withhold our esteem and goodwill from our brethren merely because they do not belong to the same section or party in the church as ourselves. And this point is strongly set before us in the course of this narrative, as related by St. Mark ix. 38, 39, and by St. Luke ix. 49, 50: "And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."—How great is the honour which the blessed Jesus here puts upon his meek and lowly followers! He speaks of them as his own representatives upon earth; he regards that which is done to them as done to himself.—And he added for our warning, *Whoso shall offend* i. e. put a stumbling-block, or an occasion of injury or falling, in the way of *one of these little ones that believe in me*,—one of my humble, child-like, disciples,—*it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea*, (according to an ancient custom of punishing grievous malefactors in the east),—it were better for him to die at once than to bring the guilt of such a sin upon his soul.—Let us beware of doing anything which may vex the spirit, and especially anything which may lead to weaken the graces, of even the meanest believer in Jesus.—But alas, such is the wickedness of man, —such the pride and obstinacy of

many men's hearts, their love of dominion and power, and their scorn of a meek and lowly temper in other men, that it *must needs be that offences come*. What lamentable testimony do the pages of church-history bear to this mournful fact! What an amount of sin and suffering has been produced by want of Christian charity and forbearance, by absence of tenderness and brotherly affection towards humble believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. How often have humility and meekness been the occasions of oppression, persecution, and contempt, instead of being rightly regarded as passports to confidence and love, and as demanding respect and cordial good-will! *But woe to that man by whom the offence cometh*. Let proud professors and proud churches tremble at their doom. And let us, for our own sakes, be on our guard against any thing which may drive or draw us into sin. *If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, &c.* (See note on ch. v. 29, 30).

In heaven their angels,—that is, the angels of these little ones, these humble child-like disciples,—*do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*. This is one reason assigned by our Lord why we should not treat any of his meek and lowly followers with contempt or disdain; namely, that God is pleased to employ the ministry of angels in their service and for their benefit. Does the king of heaven thus delight to honour them, and shall we esteem them lightly and cast out their names as evil? And

226

while we do this, shall we still call ourselves Christians and children of God? Shocking inconsistency!—And there is yet another consideration in their favour. They are the objects of the Saviour's love; they are those for whom he laid down his life; and in their welfare and eternal happiness he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. This is the second argument by which he enforces the duty of Christian tenderness and love. *For the Son of Man is come to save that which is lost*. He is the good shepherd, who came to seek the poor wanderer from the fold, and even gave his life for the sheep. And shall we, by our evil example or influence, by unkind and uncharitable tempers or proceedings, labour in an opposite direction, and throw hindrances in the way of the salvation of sinners? "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died!" Rom. xiv. 15. Rather let us concur with the gracious designs of God respecting ourselves and others, and thankfully remember, for our guidance and our comfort, that positive assertion, "*It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones i. e. humble, child-like disciples,—meek, teachable, tractable believers,—should perish*."

HYMN I.

Quiet, Lord, my froward heart,
Make me teachable and mild,
Humble, upright, free from art;
Make me as a little child,
From distrust and envy free,
Pleas'd with all that pleases Thee.

ST. MATTHEW XVIII. 15—20.

What Thou shalt to-day provide
Let me thankfully receive ;
What to-morrow may betide
Calmly to thy wisdom leave ;
'Tis enough that Thou wilt care,—
Why should I the burden bear ?

As a little child relies
On a care beyond its own,—
Knows he's neither strong nor wise
Fears to stir a step alone,—
Let me thus with thee abide,
Thou my Father, Guard, and Guide !

NEWTON.

HYMN II.

Lord, if thou thy grace impart,
Poor in spirit, meek in heart,
I shall as my Master be ;
Clothed with humility.

Simple, teachable and mild,
Chang'd into a little child ;
Pleas'd with what the Lord provides,
Wear'd from all the world besides.

Father, fix my soul on thee !
Every evil let me flee,
Nothing seek but things above,
Happy, happy, in thy love.

Oh that all may seek and find
Every good in Jesus join'd !
Him let Israel still adore,
Trust Him, praise Him, evermore !

MADAN.

§ LIX.

CHAP. XVIII. 15—20.

*Christ teacheth how we are to deal
with our brethren when they offend us.*

15 ¶ Moreover " if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if

he shall hear thee, 'thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in 'the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an 'heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, ' Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 ' Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, 'it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

a Lev. xix. 17. Ecclus. xix. 13. Luke xvii. 8.—o Jam. v. 20. 1 Pet. iii. 1.—p Dent. xvii. 6; & xix. 15. John viii. 17. 2 Cor. xiii. 1. Heb. x. 28.—q Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. v. 9. 2 Thes. iii. 6, 14. 2 John 10.—r ch. xvi. 19. John xx. 23. 1 Cor. v. 4.—s ch. v. 24.—t 1 John iii. 22; & v. 14.

Reader. Our blessed Lord here lays down some rules for the preservation of peace and good feeling among his followers. And it is observable that he has appointed the church, i. e. the particular congrega-

tion to which the offending party may belong, acting with and by its proper officers, and according to its established order, as the ultimate court of appeal, or means of arbitration and adjustment. And if one who has done wrong to another should "neglect to hear the church" i. e. should refuse to submit to the admonitions of the Christian congregation of which he is a member, he must thenceforward, as long as he may continue obstinate and incorrigible, be treated "as an heathen man and a publican" i. e. be excluded from Christian fellowship. And in ver. 18 our Lord appears to intimate that church discipline, duly exercised, is ratified by divine authority; assigning, perhaps, to his inspired Apostles an extraordinary power in this matter, as in others, but implying, at the same time, that the sanction of heaven would be given to all faithful ministers or rulers of the church, in the discharge of their duty, to the end of time.

The following judicious paraphrase of verses 15—17, contains a very correct and full interpretation of the passage. "According to this compassionate tenderness of God and your Saviour, must be your dealing with one another; not to favour sins in any, but to seek by love to save the sinner. Therefore, if any one that thou hast brotherly communion with do trespass against thee, by injury, or by scandalous crimes within thy notice, go and tell him his fault privately in brotherly love and tenderness, yet showing

him the evil of his sin that he may repent. If he hear thee so as to repent and amend, thou hast won him from the danger of his guilt, which may be a comfort to thee: but if he defend his sin, or will not repent and amend, cease not thy love or labour, but take with thee one or two meet persons, that two or three witnesses may the more awe him, or credibly convict him. And if he neglect to hear them, (having exercised due patience for the trial, and fit means to convince him), then make it public by telling the church in whose communion he liveth; either by opening it in the congregation, that the church guides may reprove him, and exhort him to repent, and pray for his repentance; or, when that is not convenient, tell it to the guides of the church, that they may make it public, and do their office. And if he neglect to hear this public exhortation, have no more communion or familiarity with him than with a heathen or a publican, but so carry it that he and others may see that thou esteemest him not as one of the Christian society whom Christ will own." With reference to ver. 18, it has been well remarked, that "what was said before to Peter is here said to all the disciples, and in them to all faithful office-bearers in the church, to the world's end. While ministers preach the word of Christ faithfully, and in their government of the church strictly adhere to his laws, they may be assured that he will own them, and stand by them, and will ratify what

they say and do, so that it shall be taken as said and done by himself.

READER. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, &c.—We may learn from ver. 15—18 many important practical lessons. Let me present them to you, in few words, as they occur to my mind in looking at the passage. It appears then, First, that unity and brotherly love is a matter of great importance in the kingdom or church of Christ. The careful and precise directions for the restoration of good-will and a good understanding, when broken, point at once to this conclusion.—Secondly, It should be our object, when a Christian brother may have done us any wrong, not to revenge ourselves upon the offender, but to gain him over to a right state of feeling and conduct.—Thirdly, Private exhortation, in a spirit of kindness, is the means which should be employed for this purpose in the first instance; and, if this should fail, the interference of Christian friends should be sought, with a view to obtain an amicable settlement of the existing difference.—Fourthly, A Christian church, or a congregation of believers in which all things are done decently and in order, ought to be able and willing to arbitrate in such cases;—to this authority we should appeal, if previous measures should have proved ineffectual;—and, if this Christian body should deem the party accused worthy of such punishment, and

cannot prevail upon him to acknowledge and make due reparation for his fault, then it possesses, and ought to exercise, the power of excluding him from its communion. And in such a case, we must cease to hold fellowship with him as the member of a Christian church; although we shall still be obliged to love, and pity, and pray for him as a fallen and erring fellow-creature.

Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, &c.—Having pointed out the misery and disadvantage of dissension, and the means of avoiding or healing it, our Saviour now declares one great benefit arising from Christian unity and fellowship. He represents it as contributing to the prevalence and efficacy of prayer. The harmonious petitions of united Christian brethren are peculiarly effectual at the throne of grace. By the acceptance and fulfilment of such petitions, for Christ's sake, God puts honour at once upon the ordinance of prayer, and upon the Christian grace of love and brotherly good-will. Let us beware of offering up even private prayer in an unforgiving temper; and let us value every means and opportunity of uniting with our brethren, in the great congregation, in presenting accordant petitions to the God and Father of us all.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. How rich a promise to public Christian prayer! How great value and dignity are hereby stamped upon our assemblies of religious worship; of which we may

indeed truly say "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"—In these words we may find a valuable instruction respecting the true nature and objects of Christian assemblies,—the constitution and work of a true Christian church or congregation. We must meet together in mutual love or fraternal charity, and in the name of Christ. "When we come together to worship God in a dependence upon the Spirit and grace of Christ as Mediator for assistance, and upon his merit and righteousness as Mediator for acceptance, having an actual regard to him as our way to the Father, and our advocate with the Father, then we are met together in his name. We must come together by virtue of his warrant and appointment, in token of our relation to him, professing faith in him, and in communion with all that in every place call upon him;—and then our congregation possesses all the needful marks or tokens of a Christian church, and is prepared to receive all the blessings which flow to believers from their gracious and ever present Head."

There am I in the midst of them.—How plain an assertion of omnipresence, on the part of Christ, and therefore of divinity! And this assertion, easily intelligible by ourselves, must have been peculiarly emphatic in the ears of Jews, because it was a current saying among them that where two or more were gathered together for the purpose of studying the Law,—the Shechinah,

or Divine presence, was among them.—Let our minds and hearts dwell upon this most precious promise. Wherever two or three are assembled in the name of Jesus, he is in the midst of them. The number of assembled worshippers may be small, but if there be true faith and devotion and brotherly love, there is also the favourable presence of their Lord.—"Every day, perhaps every hour, two or three, or many more, may be assembled in England, in Greenland, in Africa, in Ceylon, in America, in the Sandwich Islands, in Russia, and in Judea,—in almost every part of the world,—and in the midst of them all is Jesus the Saviour." "By his common presence he is in all places, as God; but this is a promise of his special presence. Where his saints are, his sanctuary is, and there he will dwell; it is his rest (Psalm cxxxii. 14), it is his walk (Rev. ii. 1):—he is in the midst of them, to quicken and strengthen them, to refresh and comfort them, as the sun is in the midst of the universe." May we have grace with one accord to make our supplications unto our God and Saviour, remembering for our encouragement His word of promise, that when two or three are gathered together in his name, he will grant their requests. And may He indeed fulfil the desires and petitions of his servants, as may be most expedient for them, granting us in this world knowledge of his truth, and in the world to come life everlasting!

HYMN.

Jesus, where'er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek Thee Thou art found,
And every place is hallow'd ground.

For Thou, within no walls confin'd,
Inhabitest the humble mind;
Such ever bring thee where they come,
And, going, take thee to their home.

Great Shepherd of thy chosen few,
Thy former mercies here renew;
Here to our waiting hearts proclaim
The glories of thy saving name.

Here may we prove the power of prayer,
To strengthen faith, and sweeten care,
To teach our faint desires to rise,
And bring all heaven before our eyes.

Lord, we are weak, but thou art near,
Nor short thine arm, nor deaf thine ear;
Oh! read the heavens, come quickly down,
And make the sinner's heart thine own!

COWPER.

§ LX.

CHAP. XVIII. 21—35.

Christ teacheth how oft to forgive; which he setteth forth by a parable of the king that took account of his servants, and punished him who shewed no mercy to his fellow.

21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? *till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: * but, Until seventy times seven.

23 ¶ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand ^ltalents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him ^rto be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and ^lworshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred ^lpence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and

told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me :

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee ?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 ' So likewise ' shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

a Luke xvii. 4.—s ch. vi. 14. Mark xi. 25. Col. iii. 13.—1 A talent is 750 ounces of silver, which after five shillings the ounce is £187 10s.—s 2 Kings iv. 1 Neh. v. viii.—1 Or, beought him.—1 The Roman penny is the eighth part of an ounce, which after five shillings the ounce is sevenpence half-penny. ch. xx. 2.—s Pro. xxi. 13. ch. vi. 12. Mark xi. 26. Jam. ii. 13.

READER.—This portion of the sacred narrative, while it is free from any verbal difficulties, is eminently practical, and may well give rise to many profitable reflections.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?—In the appeal thus made by the Apostle to our blessed Lord, there is something which is good and worthy of imitation. St. Peter was desirous to know the will of God as his rule of duty, and, in pursuit of this knowledge he applied to Christ as his teacher. That ques-

tion in the heart, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and that meek, inquiring, submissive spirit which says, Teach me thy statutes, O Lord,—Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, are among the marks of genuine religion;—they are sure characteristics of those who are children of God not only by baptism and by profession, but also by faith in Christ Jesus.—Besides this, the question of St. Peter implies a sense of the duty of forgiveness, a readiness to discharge that duty, and a wish not to do less in this matter than God required. It is said to have been a maxim among the Jews not to forgive an offending brother more than three times. And perhaps this was the rule which the Apostle had in view. He felt that it was too narrow. And he was resolved to ascertain whether it would be agreeable to the will of God that these limits should be enlarged. Lord, is it enough that I forgive once, twice, or thrice? Ought I not to forgive, if need be, even seven times?

But we may observe also something wrong, or, to say the least, exceedingly defective, in this question. Here we perceive, not only, as we hope, the power of Divine grace, but also the weakness and ignorance of human nature. Here are symptoms of a disposition to obey a rule of law,—to fulfil a covenant of works. And here perhaps we may trace also some remains of that corrupt nature which is prone to limit and stint itself in that which is good, and to ask What must I do?

rather than What can I do? As Christians, our inquiry should be not What must we do in order to avoid sin? but, What may we do, What can we do, in order to glorify God? Let us consider the bounds of God's mercy and of redeeming love, and let us resolve, by divine grace, to make the bounds of our willing obedience as far as possible, commensurate with them. And this is the system of measurement, regarding our duty which was suggested by our blessed Lord in answer to St. Peter's question.

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.—Seventy times seven is a large number used here for an indefinite one, perhaps with allusion to some common form of speech among the Jews. Our Saviour, by this answer, refused to appoint any precise limitation, such as the Apostle had suggested. It is as though he had said I do not consent to limit your duty of forgiveness in any way such as you seem to require. If you ask for the number of occasions on which you ought to extend forgiveness to one who may claim it at your hands, I only say that the number should be great—very great—unlimited.

But our Lord does not stop here. He not only rejects the false measure, but he proposes the true one. Having refused to prescribe a rule, upon the plan of a covenant of works, he proceeds to establish a principle, in harmony with the covenant of grace. He says to the

Apostle, and through him to us, in the way of parable, Forgive as ye would be yourselves forgiven by your God. Measure not your compassion to your brethren by weight or number or the standard of any human reckoning,—but regulate it by your need of God's mercy, and by the riches of that mercy towards yourselves. My law is the law of love. The mercy of redemption, is that which I hold up in the sight of my disciples to be at once their motive and encouragement to duty, and the standard whereby they may regulate their feelings and their efforts in the performance of it.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants.—Represent to yourselves the Most High under the character of an earthly sovereign, who has resolved to settle accounts with his tributaries and dependents and to demand payment of what may be found due.—God is the universal sovereign; all men are the subjects of his kingdom, and are bound to the complete observance of his holy laws. And God takes account of men's conduct towards himself in thought, word, and work. He has commissioned conscience, which is his deputy, to call them to account continually even in this present life. And at length, in his own appointed time, he will, take the matter into his own hands;—he will set up his throne of judgment, and summon before him the living and the dead, and will examine and make known what claim they have to be regarded as having rendered

perfect obedience to his holy law; and he will deal with them accordingly.

And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.—The insolvent debtor is guilty man; man who has not fulfilled God's perfect law; man who has broken that law again and again, in thought, word, and deed. If thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who shall stand! Not one. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." There is no man who can hope to find acceptance in the sight of God if judged by the law as a covenant of works, that is to say, if he stand upon the ground of his own deserts when measured by the demands of the perfect moral law. Hence it is truly and emphatically said, concerning the servant who here represents man in his ruined state, that his debt was large, and that he was utterly unable to discharge it.—His debt was large. He owed ten thousand talents; a sum equivalent to several millions of our money. The debt which we owe to divine justice is great beyond our calculation;—so vast and overwhelming that all thought of discharging it by any efforts of our own must be for ever hopeless. "Who can understand his errors?" "Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I am not able to look up, they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me."—And, as our debt is large, so

also, like the poor debtor in this parable, we are altogether unable to discharge it. Our Lord says of him that *he had not to pay*. As guilty transgressors in the sight of God we are altogether destitute of any means of repairing the honour of his broken law. We cannot offer any sacrifice, or perform any service, which may render it consistent with his holiness, truth, and justice to receive us into favour, or even to treat us as though we had never rebelled against him.—What then must be the consequence, if matters take their course, according to the covenant of works? It is declared to us in the following words.

Forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.—The portion of the guilty, considered in themselves, is total, certain, hopeless condemnation. The lord commands *the debtor to be sold*,—that is, God delivers over the offender to the everlasting suffering of the deserts and consequences of his sin;—*and payment to be made*, for, by the condemnation of transgressors the honour of God's law will be for ever receiving reparation, although that reparation will never be complete. The sufferer will be continually making payment, and yet that payment will never have been made. Such is the course of simple justice. "The wages of sin is death."—But let us now look at the liberation of this insolvent debtor.

The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him saying, Lord, have pa-

tience with me and I will pay thee all.—Here is the picture of a sinner rightly seeking salvation, and deliverance from his misery and ruin. If any ask “What must I do to be saved?” the Gospel answers, in effect, Do as the insolvent debtor did. Observe, “he fell down and worshipped,” or made submission to his lord. And it is thus that we must fall down, with sincere humiliation of soul, before the footstool of our God, acknowledging his righteousness, confessing our own sin and guilt, and renouncing all pleas or pretences founded on any supposed merit of our own.—Again, the debtor said, “Have patience with me.” In like manner, we must cast ourselves wholly upon the divine mercy. We must put our entire trust in the free, full, unmerited love and compassion of our God.—The debtor added “And I will pay thee all.” Just so, we must found our hopes of mercy upon the plea of a perfect payment. We must go to the throne of heaven confessing our poverty and helplessness, and yet saying, with holy confidence, “I will pay thee all.”—Yes: a sinner may be said to pay all, when he brings to the throne of divine justice, by faith the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; when he pleads the Redeemer’s work and righteousness, and the promises of God through him; when he seeks pardon and acceptance only for his sake. And, while he thus pleads the perfect obedience of his Saviour, he will also promise to render his own sincere and hearty obedience to God’s holy

laws. Not indeed, that he will attempt to join his own work with the complete and all-sufficient work of Christ, as part of the foundation of his plea;—but, being constrained by the love of Christ, and filled with love and admiration of God’s pure and holy law, and with hatred and indignation against sin, he will resolve and say, in humble dependence on divine grace, Henceforth I surrender unto thee my heart and life,—I devote to thy service all the power of my body and all the faculties of my soul. He will say, as it were, Here, at the footstool of thy mercy, and in the presence of the cross, I offer and present unto thee, O Lord, myself, my soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee!

Such then is the picture, here set before us, of a sinner saved. He falls down in repentance before God;—he casts himself wholly upon God’s clemency and mercy;—he trusts in Christ, who has perfectly fulfilled the law, as the channel through which mercy is conveyed;—and, under the influence of love springing from this faith, he resolves and promises, in the strength of divine grace, henceforth to give his heart, and to consecrate his services, sincerely, affectionately, unreservedly to God. The man who thus comes to God by faith in Christ is pardoned and accepted for the Redeemer’s sake.

Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. “Moved with compassion,”—it is the tender

pity, the free, sovereign mercy, of God which is the source of salvation to a lost and ruined world. "He forgave him the debt." Although satisfaction has been made by Christ, still the acceptance of a believer is an act of grace,—an effect of pure, unmerited mercy,—to himself. The debtor said "I will pay thee all;" but it is said of the lord that "he forgave the debt." He forgave him *all* that debt. God mercifully forgives all the sins of those who truly repent and come to him by Christ—It is said also that he "loosed" the servant. But let us remember that this is said concerning the discharge which he gave him from his obligation as a debtor, it does not mean that he set him free from his duty as a servant. No: he was a servant still; and he was even bound to the service of his master by new ties, more powerful than any which he had known before. It is thus also with ourselves in our relation to God. Pardon of sin, and our Christian liberty, do not destroy, or even lessen, our obligations to obedience;—but, on the contrary, that obligation is hereby preserved, renewed, and strengthened. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." See Luke i. 74, 75. Titus ii. 11—14.

But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants &c.—Our blessed Lord now proceeds to point out the application of Gospel truth and Gospel motives to the particular case of brotherly love, forbearance, and forgiveness. We

cannot mistake the meaning, of the condemnation, pronounced in the parable, upon the insolvent debtor, on account of his refusal to have patience with his fellowservant. It teaches us that a due sense of God's pardoning mercy towards ourselves disposes us to forgive our brethren,—to be patient and kind and forbearing towards those who may have annoyed us, and especially towards those who seek forgiveness.—It teaches us that God's mercies to the unmerciful are an argument against themselves.—Nay more, it teaches us that those who are indeed unmerciful—those who are not influenced by the love of their brethren who are in the world,—are also devoid of the love of God,—and therefore devoid of faith in Christ,—and therefore without an interest in Christ's salvation,—and left under the power of the law. "His lord was wroth, and delivered him unto the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." He revoked the grant that was thus forfeited.—Till he should pay all! Our debt is either wholly paid, or wholly unpaid. It is wholly paid, if we believe in Christ, and give proof of our faith by exhibiting its necessary results, love to God and love to man. But it is wholly unpaid if we do not thus believe and obey the Gospel. If there be no love, then there is no faith; and if there be no faith, then there is no pardon; and if there be no pardon, then all the guilt of all our transgressions rests upon our heads,—a weight that must sink every child of Adam into eternal ruin.

From this most instructive parable, let us learn to regard ourselves as guilty before God and utterly unable to atone for our transgressions:—to trust only in God's mercy through Christ;—and to pray evermore for the increase of that faith which may be to us the principle of all godly temper and of a holy life. And, in particular, let us cultivate that most truly Christian grace, a meek, forbearing, forgiving disposition. Let us ponder well the meaning of our Saviour's words. *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* Let us adopt, as a practical maxim of our Christian life and conversation, these words of the Apostle, "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

HYMN.

Plung'd in a gulf of dark despair
We wretched sinners lay,
Without one cheerful beam of hope
Or spark of glimm'ring day.

With pitying eye the Prince of peace
Beheld our helpless grief;
He came, and (oh amazing love!)
He died for our relief.

Oh! for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak.

Angels assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold;
But, when you raise your highest notes
His love can ne'er be told.

WATTS.

§ LXI.

CHAP. XIX. 1—15.

Christ healeth the sick; answereth the Pharisees concerning divorcement; sheweth when marriage is necessary; receiveth little children.

AND it came to pass, "that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan;

2 ^b And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, 'that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and 'they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, 'Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 'And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and who-so marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10 ¶ His disciples say unto him, 'If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, 'All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and 'there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

13 ¶ 'Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for ^m of

such is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

a Mark x. 1. John x. 40.—b ch. xii. 15.—c Gen. i. 27. & v. 2. Mal. ii. 15.—d Gen. ii. 24. Mark x. 5, 9. Eph. v. 31.—e 1 Cor. vi. 6. & vii. 2.—f Deut. xxiv. 1. ch. v. 31.—g ch. v. 32. Mark x. 11. Luke xvi. 18. 1 Cor. vii. 10. 11.—h Prov. xxi. 19.—i 1 Cor. vii. 2, 7, 9, 17.—k 1 Cor. vii. 32, 34, & ix. 5, 15.—l Mark x. 13. Luke xviii. 15.—m ch. xviii. 8.

Reader.—In order to understand the meaning and bearing of the question concerning divorce, by which the Pharisees sought to entrap our blessed Lord and impair his credit, we should be acquainted with the state of parties and opinions, at that time, concerning this subject. Two celebrated schools of Shammai and Hillel inculcated different doctrines respecting the lawful occasions of divorce; the former advocating the more strict, and in fact the more correct position, that a man could not properly put away his wife, except for the grave offence mentioned by our Lord; while the latter asserted that he might divorce her for any more trifling reason, at his pleasure.—Perhaps it was with reference to this dispute that the question was proposed; or else the Pharisees may have well known that the morality taught by our Saviour on this subject was so pure that the Mosaic permission would appear to disadvantage in comparison with it;—and hence they hoped to take occasion of bringing him into dispute as an enemy of Moses. At all events we see that our Lord did not condescend to dispute concerning the interpretation of the law of Moses, but he referred to a higher authority, and took altogether supe-

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 1—15.

rior ground, by declaring simply the will of God, in accordance with the original institution of nature. And instead of finding any fault with the law of Moses, he showed that the fault implied in the permission of divorce, lay in the hardness of men's hearts. God in his wisdom saw fit to permit (not to command as they said) one evil in order to avoid a greater. The law was designed as a protection to wives, who would otherwise have been exposed to cruel treatment on the part of wicked or capricious husbands, without being at liberty to marry again.

The contrast which our Lord exhibits between the original institution and his own doctrine on the one hand, and the Mosaic permission on the other, seems to imply that the permission, while in force, did extend beyond the limits assigned to it by the more strict interpreters.—The following is the Mosaic law on the subject, (Deut xxiv. 1—4.) with Dr. Wells's paraphrase: "When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, or he dislikes her, because he has found some uncleanness in her, *i. e.* somewhat that is odious to him, though it may not be to another, then it shall not be in his power to turn her out of doors without any more ado, but let him write her a bill of divorcement, *i. e.* an instrument or writing whereby he makes known to her and all others, that for some weighty reasons to himself he puts her away as being no longer his wife, and give it in her hand, and so send her out of his house, having furnished

her with what was fitting and requisite.

And when she is departed out of his house she may go and be another man's wife." And a provision is added, that it shall not be lawful for the first husband even to take her as his wife again. The whole regulation is evidently intended as a check to hasty and capricious conduct on the part of husbands. But the check which the Gospel proposes is far more effectual, and far better. The Mosaic permission has been recalled; and men are bound to comply with the original institution of marriage, in the spirit of tenderness and love.

READER. Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him.—How various the motives and feelings with which men followed the footsteps of the blessed Jesus during his ministry on earth! Doubtless many of the large multitudes who now attended him were seeking the cure of bodily disorders for themselves or for their friends,—others, we may hope, were seeking heavenly wisdom and grace,—others were influenced by a mere idle love of novelty or vain curiosity, and others, alas, were guided by evil and malicious motives, with hearts sealed against the power of the Redeemer's word, and the beauty of his good example, and eager to weaken his authority, and pour contempt upon his person, his office, and his works. And is not the same

variety of temper and conduct observable in those who, in the present day, read or hear the Gospel? Let us take heed how we hear! May it be ours, through divine grace, to follow the blessed Jesus in lowliness, meekness, and charity, and to order our footsteps by his holy word. So may we hope to be hereafter numbered among those concerning whom it is declared, "These are they which follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth." Rev. xiv. 4.

Have ye not read?—How happily would men be delivered from false opinions and needless doubts if they would attend, with simplicity and a teachable mind, to the plain declaration of God's written word!

He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.—

Such is the great and blessed law of marriage, as originally instituted by the wise and beneficent Creator, and plainly stated by our heavenly Teacher and Redeemer.—In the conversation which took place between the Pharisees and our Saviour on this subject we find several occasions of profitable reflection.

Here we see the goodness and wisdom of God. Our thoughts are carried back to that declaration, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Gen. ii. 18. It was upon a large and unerring survey of our state, and circumstances, that the

benevolent Creator instituted marriage as a blessing to the human race. He did not ordain that the race should be continued in the same way as the tribes of inferior animals, but it pleased him to appoint that inseparable union of one man and one woman for life, which might become the foundation or source of a large amount of comfort and happiness for the individuals united by this hallowed bond, for their families, and society at large. How sweet and refreshing are the waters of comfort, which flow from the fountain thus opened by the hand of Almighty love and wisdom! What mutual, help, protection, and encouragement! What joys of home! What charms of sympathy and love! What useful and delightful relations of domestic life! How great is the variety of good which proceeds from this one simple law, such is the perfection of the works of God wherever they are found.

Here we discover also the evil of sin. How sin mars the beautiful and perfect works of God! Whence that permission in the Mosaic law, which was not from the beginning? It arose from the hardness of men's hearts. Here we discover a lesser evil tolerated in order to prevent a greater. But even that lesser evil was in itself lamentably great. It implies the existence of cruelty, caprice, or hardhearted selfishness on the part of husbands; or the want of affection, amiable temper, or faithfulness on the part of wives! And then the want of certainty, and in-

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 1—15.

dissoluble strictness, in the marriage union, which existed under this modification of the original law, was itself a diminution of the blessing. What disappointment and disgust, what weariness of life, what hardships and persecutions, what fear and timidity, and jealousy, and inquietude are stamped upon the very face of this needful, but mournful permission.—And we may observe how extensively the evil had wrought, and how much the minds of men had become accustomed to undervalue the blessings of holy matrimony. This appears from the remark of the disciples in the tenth verse: “His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” What ! not good to marry, because it is no easy matter to undo the marriage bond? Oh, how deeply thankful should we be for that better and brighter view of this blessed estate, which is revealed to us in the pages of the Gospel! It “is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man’s innocence, signifying unto us the mystical union betwixt Christ and his church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified by his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; and is commended of St. Paul to be honourable among all men.” See Eph. v. 22—33.

Again, in this passage we have a most interesting view of our blessed Lord as the great prophet or teacher of his church. We see him here expounding and enforcing the ori-

ginal will and law of God; not only vindicating it from the false glosses, and the cavils or objections, of men, but even recovering it from a temporary obscurity which it had suffered under the law of Moses. Let Christ be the teacher of every married pair, and they cannot but be happy. Blessed indeed are they whom God has joined together, not only by the law of marriage, but also by the participation of his grace. “This is that,” says Archbishop Leighton, “which most strongly binds their hearts together and makes them one. If each be reconciled unto God in Christ, and so an heir of life, and one with God, then are they truly one in God with each other; and that is the surest and sweetest union that can be. Natural love hath risen very high in some husbands and wives; but the highest of it falls very far short of that which holds in God. Hearts concentrating in him are most excellently one. That love which is cemented by youth and beauty, when these moulder and decay, as soon as they do, fades too. That is somewhat purer and so more lasting, which holds in a natural or moral harmony of minds; yet, these likewise may alter and change by some great accident. But the most refined, most spiritual, and most indissoluble is that which is knit with the highest and purest spirit. And the ignorance or disregard of this is the great cause of so much bitterness, or so little true sweetness, in the life of most married persons; because God is left out, because they meet

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 1—15.

not as one in him. But happy those persons, in any society of marriage or friendship, who converse together as those that shall live eternally together in glory. This is indeed the sum of all duties."

Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.—See ch. xviii. 3.—How beautifully and significantly is the act of Christ's blessing little children connected in the Gospel history with his discourse concerning marriage! Surely Christian parents cannot but find here a cheering encouragement to dedicate their offspring to the blessed Saviour, in full confidence of his favourable regard on their behalf. Nor can we be mistaken in considering the circumstance here recorded as a token of approbation in favour of the Christian practice of Infant-baptism. Notwithstanding the rebuke of the disciples, Jesus encouraged those who brought unto him these little children,—these very young children, as the word in the original intimates. And while we know, from the practice of circumcision, that an infant of eight days old is capable of being taken into covenant with God, how can we for a moment suppose that such are incapable of being taken into the Christian covenant,—a covenant which has for its foundation the person and the work of him who has thus emphatically said, "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me."—Let parents, then, place their young children within the bonds of the covenant of grace, by the solemn act of baptism

242

into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; let them thus offer and dedicate them to the service of their God and Saviour, and implore his blessing on their heads;—let them afterwards commit them continually to his care, with faith and prayer;—let them see that they be taught, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession has been made on their behalf, and that they be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life;—and then let them not doubt, but earnestly believe, that Christ will favourably receive the infants whom they faithfully present at the baptismal font, that he will embrace them with the arms of his mercy, that he will give unto them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of his everlasting kingdom.

He laid his hands on them, and departed thence.—Thus may his hands be laid on all those in whose baptismal dedication to God we may have taken any part! "Let thy fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be over them; let thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life!"

HYMN I.

Lo! Israel's gracious Shepherd stands
With all-engaging charms:
Behold, he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms.

"Permit them to approach," he cries,
"Nor scorn their humble name.
For 'twas to bless such souls as these
The Lord of glory came."

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 16—30.

We bring them, Lord, by fervent pray'r,
And yield them up to Thee;
Joyful that we ourselves are thine,
Thine let our offspring be!

DODDRIDGE.

HYMN II.

Our children, Lord, in faith and pray'r,
We would devote to Thee;
Let them thy covenant mercies share
And thy salvation see.

Such helpless babes thou didst embrace
While dwelling here below;
To us, and ours, O God of grace,
The same compassion show.

In early days their hearts secure
From worldly snares, we pray;
And may they to the end endure
In every righteous way.

Grant us before them, Lord, to live,
In holy faith and fear;
And then to heav'n our souls remove,—
To meet our children there!

§ LXII.

CHAP. XIX. 16—30.

Christ instructeth the young man how to attain eternal life, and how to be perfect; telleth his disciples how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; and promiseth reward to those that forsake anything to follow him.

16 ¶ " And, behold, one came and said unto him, ° Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good?

there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, ° Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 ' Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, ' go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That ' a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his disciples heard

it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but "with God all things are possible.

27 ¶ "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, ' we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ' ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 " And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 ^b But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

^a Mark x. 17. Luke xviii. 18.—^o Luke x. 25.—^p Ex. xx. 13.—Deut. v. 17.—^q ch. xv. 4.—^r Lev. xix. 18. ch. xxii. 30. Rom. xlii. 9. Gal. v. 14. James ii. 8.—^s ch. vi. 20. Luke xii. 33; & xvi. 9. Acts ii. 45; & iv. 34, 35, 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.—^t ch. xlii. 22. Mark x. 24. 1 Cor. i. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.—^u Gen. xviii. 14. Job xlii. 2. Jer. xxvii. 17. Zech. viii. 6. Luke i. 37; & xviii. 27.—^v Mark x. 24. Luke xviii. 24.—^w Deut. xxiii. 9. ch. iv. 20. Luke xviii. 24.—^y Deut. xxiii. 9. ch. iv. 20. Luke v. 11.—^z ch. xx. 21. Luke xxii. 28, 29, 30. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Rev. ii. 26.—^a Mark x. 29, 30. Luke xviii. 29, 30.—^b ch. xx. 16; & 21, 31, 32. Mark x. 31. Luke xii. 30.

Reader.—We find the substance of this narrative repeated in Mark

x. 17—31, and Luke xviii. 30.—From St. Luke we learn that the young man who came to our Lord on this occasion was "a ruler," i. e. probably, a ruler of a synagoge; and St. Mark tells us that he came running,—and that he fell upon his knees, by way of respectful salutation. The latter Evangelist also mentions the affecting circumstance that "Jesus, beholding him, loved him;" that is, was pleased with his amiable manners, even while, as a teacher of truth, he declared his moral delinquency, and guilt in the sight of God.

It may be observed that, by saying to this young man "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God," our Saviour probably intended to give him an opportunity of declaring his conviction of the Messiahship of him to whom he had given that title. He might have justified his style of address, by saying, "Yea Lord, but thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" It appears, however, that he had not formed any correct idea of the real nature and dignity of the person whom he was addressing; he regarded him as a mere human teacher, or prophet; and consequently, the appellation "good," though not too much for Christ to receive, as being himself God as well as man, was yet too much for this young man to bestow, as being ignorant of his divinity. He gave, perhaps thoughtlessly, to one whom he supposed to be no more than man, that honour which belongs to God alone. And our Lord saw fit

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 16—30.

to administer a reproof accordingly.

The expression (ver. 24) "for a camel (or elephant) to go through the eye of a needle," is a common oriental phrase to denote any thing impossible or extremely difficult. A reading, which has been sometimes adopted, whereby the Greek word for "a cable" has been substituted for that denoting "a camel," appears to have originated in mistake, probably on the part of some transcribers who were ignorant of the form of speech employed by our Saviour on this occasion. A commentator, well versed in oriental literature, reminds us that there is an expression similar to this in the Koran, (Surat vii. ver. 37);—"The impious, who in his arrogance shall accuse our doctrine of falsity, shall find the gates of heaven shut; nor shall he enter there till a camel shall pass through the eye of a needle. It is thus that we shall recompense the wicked." And he adds that, "it was also a mode of expression common among the Jews, and signified a thing impossible." Hence this proverb, "A camel in Media dances in a kabe,"—a measure which held about three pints. Again, "No man sees a palm tree of gold, nor an elephant passing through the eye of a needle;" because these are impossible things. "Rabbi Shesheth answered Rabbi Amram, who had advanced an absurdity, Perhaps thou art one of the Pambidithians who can make an elephant pass through the eye of a needle;—that is, says the Aruch, who speak things impossible."

The words of the 28th verse may require some explanation. It is commonly supposed that the phrase "in the regeneration" means "at the restoration of all things," when the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and there will be new heavens and a new earth,—when the order of the universe, which has been disturbed by sin, shall be restored. And the entire promise to the Apostles, conveyed under the figure of an earthly monarch and his deputies, implies that they should receive eminent dignity in the kingdom of Messiah. Perhaps it is not possible to determine the meaning of this promise more closely; it may be sufficient to regard it as a grant of peculiar honour to be hereafter bestowed upon those who were peculiarly zealous and laborious in their master's cause.

READER. One came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?—What was the character of this young man?—His address and general deportment appear to have been extremely amiable; and he seems to have manifested some seriousness in religious matters. But we discover those moral defects, which betray, it must be feared, a heart not right with God. Perhaps, at the foundation of that question, "What good thing shall I do?" there was a proud desire to work out a path to eternal life in the way of merit. He wished

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 16—30.

to enjoy heaven as his due,—something which he could challenge at the hand of God as his undoubted right on account of previous desert. A desire to obtain everlasting happiness is quite consistent with that proud and independent frame of mind which is the essence of rebellion, and alienation from the living God. Again, there was probably no small degree of unfounded self-complacency, — and ignorance, more or less voluntary, of the real nature and tenor of his past conduct, — in that question of this young man, What lack I yet? He had not perfectly fulfilled the moral law, even so far as it related to his duties towards his neighbours. But he was not acquainted with his own demerits; and therefore little disposed to exercise penitence, humility, and faith. And, moreover, he appears to have been a slave of covetousness, or at least of a love of the world and of his present possessions. He could not consent to renounce his riches even at the command of one whom he seemed disposed to recognise as a “good teacher.”—Let us gather instruction from his history. Let us be willing to receive eternal life, humbly and thankfully, as the gift of God, and not as the fruit of our own doings or deservings. Let us honestly compare our own lives and actions with the entire and perfect law of God, and learn to seek pardon for our offences, rather than to boast of a fancied righteousness. And let us watch and pray against the insidious and encroaching love of present good; remembering that

solemn admonition, “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.—If we would obtain eternal life under the moral law as a covenant of works, then we must render complete, unflinching, sinless obedience to that law. But this, through the fall, has become impossible. See Rom. iii. 20—28; Gal. ii. 16; Eph. ii. 9; 2 Tim i. 9.—If we would be saved under the Gospel, then we must keep the commandments, or fulfil the demands, of that dispensation. These commandments are summed up in the duties of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are required to surrender ourselves sincerely to the love and service of God, coming to him by faith in the one Mediator Jesus Christ, and showing forth our faith by our works. This, through grace given, we can do, and must do, if we would partake of that great gift of God, eternal life.—The commandments to which our Lord referred the young man were those of the second table, comprising our duty to our neighbour; and, if he had failed in respect of them, how much more had he come short of his duty towards God! He asserted, however, that he had kept all these things from his youth up. Perhaps he had done so, outwardly, in the letter; but he had failed in the spirit. His covetousness and love of the world had involved practically the neglect of many a duty; and this continued to be one of his besetting sins. Our

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 16—30.

Lord therefore proposed a test, with reference to this evil disposition; and he could not abide it.—Let us continually seek not only for that mercy which may pardon our transgressions and failings, but also for that grace which may write the law upon our hearts, and enable us to obey it not in the letter only, but in the spirit. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus ii. 11—14.

Jesus saith unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, &c.—As a touchstone of his sincerity and the universality of his obedience, our blessed Lord proposed to this young ruler the same line of conduct which had been already adopted by his Apostles. He gave him the same call (Follow me) to which others had cheerfully responded, forsaking all. They, through grace given, had obeyed the call; but he, through pride and ignorance, and an evil love of the world, resisted the grace, and refused to obey. Let their conduct be our pattern and encouragements; and let his be our warning. *He went away sorrowful.* Riches that keep the heart from God, will one day be sore occasions of sorrow to their possessors.

Verily, I say unto you, that a rich

man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. We find, by reference to St. Mark, that our Lord is here speaking particularly of “them that trust in riches.” But it cannot be doubted that the mere possession of wealth is, in itself, a source of temptation, and forms a difficulty to be overcome,—an especial obstacle to be surmounted,—in the way of salvation. Still, praise be to the Divine goodness, and the power of Divine grace, these difficulties are not necessarily fatal. He who gives abundance of riches, is also ready to bestow abundance of that spiritual influence whereby their peculiar dangers may be successfully met and overcome. With men it is impossible to deliver the rich man’s heart from the love of this world,—to save it either from grasping covetousness on the one hand, or from self-indulgence and sensuality on the other; but “with God all things are possible,” and this among the rest. He can give power to obey that command. “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.” And, through his grace strengthening us, we may be enabled to “trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God.”

Then answered Peter,—still, as on other occasions, the forward speaker, and in this instance betraying perhaps some symptoms of human weakness,—Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?—It was comparatively little of this world’s good which these poor fishermen had been called upon to forsake; but still it was their all.

This they cheerfully yielded up at the command of Christ; and we know, from the history of the widow and her two mites, that the Lord Jesus Christ considers rather the intention and spirit of the donor, than the magnitude of the gifts. In like manner, let us comply with that demand, "My son, give me thy heart;" and with that apostolic exhortation, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Perhaps there was too much self-complacency, and too much of a mercenary spirit, in this question of St. Peter; but the Lord saw that there was withal sincerity and uprightness of heart, with faith; and he accepted those good dispositions which had been wrought by the power of Divine grace, overlooking the human imperfections with which they were blended. He saw that the young man's heart was buried in the world, even while he was proposing that question, What good thing shall I do? And he saw that Peter's heart was really given to God, even while he was asking, What shall we have? The Lord seeth not as man seeth; he judgeth righteous judgment. He searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men.—How full of kindness and compassion does our Saviour appear on this occasion; amply sustaining his gracious character as one that "will not bruise the broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax." He condescended to give an encouraging reply to

Peter's inquiry. And he added, for the encouragement of all believers, to the latest ages of the church,

Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.—If we make sacrifices from a principle of duty or conscience, and in the service of religion, we shall be no losers. We may not recover, or receive again, the same things, in kind, but we shall obtain the same, and far more, in value. Not indeed that we can hereby make God a debtor; but he is pleased to manifest his loving-kindness and the riches of his grace, in this way, as well as in many others.—St Mark adds, "with persecutions," i. e. notwithstanding persecutions. The comforts and blessings which God will give will be very great, even taking into account all the troubles we may suffer.—"The gifts and graces, the comforts and consolations of the Holy Spirit shall be an hundredfold better portion than any thing we can part with for the sake of Christ and his Gospel here. Though we may be losers for Christ, yet we never shall be losers by him. Christ gives present recomponces as well as future rewards; insomuch, that they who have suffered and lost most for Christ have never complained of their sufferings or losses. Therefore never be afraid to lose any thing for Christ; he will not only see you indemnified, but plentifully re-

ST. MATTHEW XX. 1—16.

warded; in this world an hundred-fold, in that to come eternal life." How happy a thing it is to serve a Master who has all the treasures of nature and of grace, and all the ages of time and eternity, at his command! Surely we may well write under such a promise as this the words which our blessed Lord addressed to his disciples on another occasion, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John xv. 11.

HYMN.

Thou boundless source of every good,
Our best desires fulfil;
And help us to adore thy grace,
And mark thy sovereign will.

In all thy mercies may our souls
Thy bounteous goodness see;
Nor let the gifts thy grace imparts
Estrange our souls from thee.

Teach us, in time of deep distress,
To own thy hand, O God!
And in submissive silence learn
The lessons of thy rod.

In every changing scene of life,
Whate'er that scene may be,
Give us a meek and humble mind,
A mind at peace with thee.

Do thou direct our steps aright,
Help us thy name to fear;
And give us grace to watch and pray
And strength to persevere.

Then may we close our eyes in death,
Free from distracting care;
For death is life, and labour rest,
If thou art with me there.

§ LXIII.

CHAP. XX. 1—16.

Christ, by the similitude of the labourers in the vineyard, sheweth that God is debtor unto no man.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and what-

soever is right, *that* shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12 Saying, These last^h have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? ^hIs thine eye evil because I am good?"

16 "So the last shall be first,"

and the first last: ^hfor many be called, but few chosen.

^h The Roman penny is the eighth part of an ounce which after five shillings the ounce is sevenpence half-penny. ch. xviii. 28.—^hOr, have continued one hour only.—^a Rom. ix. 21.—^b Deut. xv. 9. Prov. xxiii. 6. ch. vi. 28.—^c ch. xix. 30.—^d ch. xxii. 14.

Reader. This parable of the labourers in the vineyard is designed as an illustration of the sentiment contained in the last verse of the foregoing chapter, and repeated at the close of the parable, that "many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." We are taught that God, in his treatment of the various members of the church, will not make any difference whatever on account of the time of their calling, or the age of the church in which they lived. He will show no favour to the early patriarch or to the later Christian, as such; but will give all and each their due. And we are also given to understand that among the members of the later church there will be many who will obtain priority, and gain advantage over the earlier believers.—More particularly, the parable seems to refer to the calling of the Gentiles, and their being made partakers of equal privileges with the Jews. The Gentiles are represented under the figure of the labourers hired at the eleventh hour; and the unwillingness of the Jews to acquiesce in the Divine dispensation concerning them is described under the image of the murmuring of the earlier labourers against "the goodman of the house;"—just as the elder son is represented as complaining of his father's reception of the younger

brother, in the parable of the returning prodigal. But God would have mercy on the Gentiles without doing any injustice to the Jews. It is remarkable that a precise stipulation was made with the labourers first called into the vineyard; whereas those who were subsequently engaged were only told that they should receive due compensation: and this may serve to intimate the different character of the two dispensations, Mosaic and Evangelical. All this is, more or less clearly, within the scope of our Saviour's meaning.—The secondary interpretation, which regards the several hours of the day as pointing to the various periods of an individual's life, proceeds, I think, upon less certain grounds; and may easily be so stated or understood, as to be open to serious objection. However, if adopted according to the analogy of faith, it may be made useful for edification, and may give rise to much profitable reflection. All Christians, we must remember, have been called into God's vineyard, from their early days;—if they have remained idle, this has not been for want of a call, but through their own fault; and we cannot but fear that they who refuse to give their hearts and services to God until the end of their lives, will be great losers by their unbelief and backwardness. But all will receive their due; not indeed the fruit of their deserts, but that treatment which is just and right according to the covenant of grace. And if some late convert should be found more zealous and active in the

service of his master than older believers, and should receive a higher reward at last, yet none will have cause to complain on this account, and all will be bound to declare, "Just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints."

The details of the parable do not need much explanation.—"The penny," or Roman denarius, here mentioned as the hire of the labourers, is equal to about sevenpence halfpenny of our money, or a little more; so that wages are reckoned at the rate of 3s. 9d. or 4s. a week.—The hours of the day are reckoned in the manner following: Sunrise was the first hour, so that the third hour was about nine o'clock in the morning,—the sixth hour, twelve o'clock,—the ninth hour, three,—and the eleventh hour, five.

In this parable it is especially important to observe that rule which applies to the interpretation of parables generally,—namely, not to argue from particular circumstances introduced into the narrative, but to keep the mind steadily fixed on the meaning and bearing of the whole.

It must be borne in mind that this parable was spoken by our Lord in continuation of his answer to St. Peter, the beginning of which is recorded in the latter end of the preceding chapter. In this answer our Saviour was speaking especially of those who should make extraordinary sacrifices, and evince uncommon devotedness and zeal, for God's service in gospel times. And hence it is more than probable that the reference in the parable is to such labourers as these,—to those who may be regarded

as doing more work in a short time than others may have done in a longer period. Still, this is not the point at which the parable directly aims; and, although it is true that God will reward every man "according to his works," yet we must be careful so to understand and receive this truth as not to forget that the reward is, after all, a reward of grace and not of debt. This parable does not contradict the doctrine to which I have referred, but it seems rather to avoid it,—to pass by it as foreign from its purpose; and it directs our minds rather in the channel of that significant inquiry, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" It reminds us that "God is debtor unto no man;" and that his bounty and free grace are perfectly consistent with his justice. Let us learn this admirable lesson with all simplicity, humility, and faith.

The general outline of this parable appears to have been in common use among the Jews; as appears from various specimens which have been collected by learned men. In the Jerusalem Gemara, or Talmud, Cod. Berachoth, we read of a king and certain labourers hired by him: one of these received the amount of a whole day's wages, after having worked for a much shorter time; and hereupon the others were dissatisfied, and they complained to the employer, saying, "We have wrought all day, but this man has not laboured during more than two hours of the day, and yet has received his full hire." And, in reply, the king said, "In those two hours this man has done as much

work as you have done all day long."

READER. God is at once bountiful and just. He does all things according to his sovereign will and pleasure; but his will, we must remember is not arbitrary or capricious, and is always in perfect harmony with truth and right. And although God is pleased to satisfy the minds of humble and inquiring believers concerning the righteousness and equity of his dealings, yet he is debtor unto no man, and is not bound to give account of any of his matters. And if proud men, in a captious and murmuring spirit, question the propriety or justice of this or that dispensation of God's hand, the answer which they receive is a solemn and dignified appeal to his sovereign will and supreme authority. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because mine is good?* Such is the great practical lesson which this parable is intended to convey. But there are many other salutary truths to which it may well conduct our minds. And perhaps I cannot do better than exhibit them to you, for the most part, as I find them, here and there, in the Commentary of the pious and devout Queanel.

As this *householder went forth to hire labourers into his vineyard*, so God, in creation and redemption, has gone forth to call men to his service. His church is a heavenly kingdom, because it is sacred to the knowledge of him, to his worship, to his fear,

ST. MATTHEW XX. 1—16.

and to his love. It is a vineyard, because his servants labour, and indolence is forbidden. Each of us is hired, or rather created, that we may work out our salvation according to the will of God.

No season disqualifies for the work of salvation; and the mercy of God can give effect to that work at any hour, however late. No age, indeed, will excuse us for standing idle; and yet it is never too late to engage in that work without which eternity is hopeless. Alas! the world is full of men who pass their whole existence in idleness; and are about to quit life without having ever learned for what end it was bestowed. Unless the great master hire and send us into his vineyard,—unless Jesus Christ himself seek us out, and send us forth, and engage us in his work,—we shall either remain sunk in indolence, or we shall work only the works of darkness. Salvation is in Christ alone; without him man is abandoned to himself, that is to impotence and darkness.

When even was come, the labourers were summoned to receive their wages. We must labour throughout the day, until the evening come,—through life, until death. Happy evening, and commencement of the glorious day of eternity for those who have laboured in faith and hope, looking for the coming of the Lord from heaven, the dispenser of his Father's blessings! It is a matter of consolation to the weakest Christian to know that none who have loved and served the gracious Saviour shall be ashamed in his presence, or fail of the reward.

True conversion, although at the eleventh hour, will be followed by the reward; but to defer the business of salvation until the latest season, is to put every thing to hazard. The everlasting enjoyment of God is vouchsafed to all God's labourers alike. A moment, indeed, may secure it; but it is no less madness to wait for that moment in rash presumption, than to let it pass away through distrust of God's mercy.

They murmured against the good-man of the house.—Yes: these are those who murmur at God's gracious dispensation. There are, it may be, not a few whose long labour, severe austerities, and abstinence from outward sins serve only to nourish their pride, to fill them with contempt for other men, and to give them a feeling as if God were in their debt. Our best doings are but destructive of salvation, unless we refer them, in grateful lowliness of spirit, to God as their true originator,—unless we acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants, and that, in giving us our hire, God will bestow a reward, not of debt, but of grace. All his recompences are gratuitous; since they are but the acknowledgment of those services which he has himself given the will and the power to perform.

The last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.—Our dependence must be not on ourselves, not on our work of righteousness, but on the goodness and grace of God. God proportions his bounty, not by the order of vocation, nor by the duration of labour, nor by the difficulty of the task, nor

ST. MATTHEW XX. 17—28.

by the greatness of the work, but by the love, the lowliness, the faithfulness with which he has himself inspired the heart. The lower the value we put upon our labour, the greater will be the hire. We have nothing that we have not received; and it behoves us always to keep this in mind. Our only title to glory is the promise of God: and the truly humble will never lose sight of this; not envying the brighter graces or the higher gifts of others, but retaining the consciousness of their own unworthiness, and admiring the greater faithfulness and work of more eminent believers.

Jesus Christ distributes his gifts according to his own good pleasure; and each should be content with his portion. The will and designs of God are always supremely righteous; and they are under the direction of infinite wisdom, although completely beyond the range of human reason. In the present life they are hidden from man, that he may learn not to debate with God, but to seek him in the way of faith.

Let us not presume on any thing; neither let us in any wise despair. It is not by their calling, but by their perseverance, that the elect are known. It is for him who giveth after the counsel of his own will to judge concerning the state of man's affections towards himself. Our part is, under all circumstances, to walk humbly; since it is humility alone that can keep the highest in grace from becoming lowest, and that can make the lowest first.

PSALM LXXXIX.

My never ceasing songs shall show
The mercies of the Lord;
And make succeeding ages know
How faithful is his word.

The sacred truths his lips pronounce,
Shall firm as heav'n endure;
And if he speak a promise once
Th' eternal grace is sure.

How long the race of David held
The promis'd Jewish throne!
But there's a nobler covenant seal'd
To David's greater son.

His seed for ever shall possess
A throne above the skies;
The meanest subject of his grace
Shall to that honour rise.

Lord God of Hosts, thy wondrous ways
Are sung by saints above;
And saints on earth their honour raise
To thy unchanging love.

WATTS.

§ LXIV.

CHAP. XX. 17—28.

Christ foretelleth his passion; and, by answering the mother of Zebedee's children teacheth his disciples to be lowly.

17 ¶ And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 † Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

19 † And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to

scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again.

20 ¶ Then came to him the mother of 'Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons 'may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of 'the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with "the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to 'give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 'And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus called them unto *him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But 'it shall not be so among you: but 'whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 'And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 'Even as the "Son of man came not to be ministered unto, 'but to minister, and 'to give his life a ransom 'for many.

o Mark x. 32. Luke xviii. 31. John xii. 12.—f ch. xvi. 21.—g ch. xxvii. 2. Mark xv. 1, 16. &c. Luke xxiii. 1. John xviii. 28, &c. Acts iii. 13.—A Mark x. 35.—d ch. iv. 21.—h ch. xix. 28.—i ch. xxvi. 39, 42. Mark xiv. 36. Luke xxii. 42. John xviii. 11.—m Luke xii. 60.—n Acts xii. 2. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Cor. i. 7. Rev. i. 9.—o ch. xxv. 34.—p Mark x. 41. Luke xxii. 24, 25.—q 1 Peter v. 3.—r ch. xxiii. 11. Mark ix. 35, & x. 43.—s ch. xviii. 4.—t John xiii. 4.—u Phil. ii. 7.—v Luke xxii. 27. John xiii. 14.—w Isaiah liii. 10, 11. Daniel ix. 24, 26. John xi. 51, 52. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Peter i. 19.—x ch. xxvi. 28. Rom. v. 15, 19. Heb. ix. 28.

Reader. The sons of Zebedee here mentioned were the Apostles James and John, whom our Lord called while they were "in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets." Matt. iv. 21. Their mother was probably Salome, of whom we read in Mark xv. 40; xvi. 1.—St. Mark in the parallel passage, x. 35—45, represents the Apostles as themselves making the request; that is to say, he omits the circumstance of the interference of their mother: so that, putting the two accounts together, we should say, that they themselves promoted, and perhaps originated, the petition, but it was formally addressed to our Saviour by their mother speaking on their behalf.—The sitting on the right hand, and on the left, may have reference to the common practice of princes,—or, more particularly, as

ST. MATTHEW XX. 17—28.

some suppose, to the seats of honour in the Sanhedrim.

Our translators have not been happy in their rendering of part of the 23rd verse. Indeed, the words which they have inserted in italics, without authority or any good reason, appear to give even a false complexion to the sense; as though our Saviour were here asserting that it is not his office to distribute rewards and honours in his kingdom! The simple translation of the Greek is this;—"To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, except to them for whom it is prepared of my father,"—or we may retain the word *but* in this sense, "is not mine to give but, &c." Our blessed Lord merely affirms that he will not make any arbitrary or capricious choice of favourites;—and that, in dispensing his blessings and rewards, he will act, as in all other cases, in accordance with the will and ordinance of the Father who sent him. As God, his will is one with the Father; as man, it is in complete subordination and submission. Therefore as Mediator, God and man, Christ will give rewards only according to the wise and holy purpose of the Father; and we know that it is his purpose to give them, not to persons who may possess certain privileges, or stand in a certain visible connection with the Redeemer or his church, but to those who shall be fitted to receive them,—to those who shall be (so to speak) entitled to them, according to the covenant of grace.

READER.—Our blessed Lord's prophetic declaration of his sufferings and death is here repeated for the third time, (see chap. xvi. 21; xvii. 22, 23). It sounds like a knell ringing at solemn intervals in the Gospel, preparatory to the closing scene of our Saviour's deep humiliation.—Our minds may well be affected with a sense of the voluntary character of our great sacrifice, from the deliberate manner in which Jesus faced and met his sufferings. Let the eye of our faith contemplate the picture which these few verses exhibit;—the man of sorrows, not only accompanying his disciples, but heading them, leading the way, in this most eventful journey towards Jerusalem.—St. Mark, in the parallel passage, (chap. x. 32—34,) sets this circumstance in a striking point of view. He says, "They were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him."—May we bear upon our hearts a devout and affectionate remembrance of this mournful journey! As disciples of the blessed Saviour, may we see him going before us in our journey, through life and death, to the heavenly Jerusalem!

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, &c.—There are many points in this narrative from which we may derive instruction.

Here we perceive undue solicitude on the part of a parent, and its failure. Doubtless it is one part of a parent's happy duty to offer up prayers on be-

half of their children. They should, as it were, go with them to Jesus. But they should remember that their prayers for their children, as well as for themselves, ought to be "according to the will of God." And they may learn, from this history, not to be supremely anxious for their obtaining earthly dignity or power.

Here also we fear that we discover a worldly spirit and an ambitious turn of mind, on the part of James and John. Alas! they do not appear to have rightly understood the nature of our Saviour's kingdom, and they were disposed to mix up with it their favourite ideas of earthly pomp and power, even after having witnessed on the mount of transfiguration that exhibition of our Saviour's glory which might well have cast all worldly splendour for ever into the shade! How fondly man's heart cleaves to things present and temporal! How earnestly should we pray that God would continually make us to love that which he promises, as well as enable us to perform that which he commands.—But here we have, more particularly, a specimen and type of ambition, ecclesiastical ambition, —a love of preeminence and power in the church. Sad, pestilential spirit—which, although solemnly denounced by Christ, has existed, to the present day, with lamentable consequences, among Christian churches!

These Apostles were ignorant of the true nature of their request (*ye know not what ye ask*), and of their own weakness and inability to

do and suffer all that the grant of it would involve (*We are able*).—When we read of the life and sufferings of our holy and blessed Lord, let us think of him as addressing to ourselves that inquiry—Are ye able to drink of my cup? And then let us remember, for our comfort and direction, that although we are not able to do this of ourselves, yet we can do all things through Christ, by his Spirit, strengthening us. The Lord Jesus gave strength to these weak disciples to do and suffer much for his sake. St. James was put to death by Herod, Acts xii. 2; and St. John was banished to Patmos, Rev. i. 9.

The extravagant and ambitious views of these disciples gave occasion to great discontent and jealousy among their brethren. *When the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.* They ought, perhaps, to have pitied them;—but one evil often leads to another. And not a few of the animosities, heart burnings, and divisions which have arisen in Christian churches, may be traced to some aspiring and ambitious pretensions on the part of spiritual rulers,—to some acts of aggression or usurpation, which have aroused the indignation of men, and excited them to acts of severe and uncharitable recrimination.—How plain and pointed is our Saviour's rebuke of this ambitious and domineering spirit! How solemnly does he assure us that this worldly desire of rule, distinction, and preeminence is totally inconsistent with

the spirit of his heavenly religion ! *Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.* BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU. These are words which ought to be carefully considered in framing, or remodelling, the constitution of a church. And they ought to be habitually and practically regarded by the ministers of every church, without exception.

Our Lord took occasion, in the course of his reply, to declare the justice and equity of God's dealings under the gospel dispensation. He assures us that it is not possible even for him, as the head of the church, to distribute rewards and honours upon any other principles than those of eternal truth and rectitude. He neither desires, nor is able, to give seats in his kingdom to any "but to those for whom it is prepared by his father." Perhaps the best practical comment that can be given upon these very important words is a reference to the twenty-fifth chapter of this gospel : see especially verses 21, 33, 34.

How strikingly do the mildness and gentleness of our Saviour's character appear in the whole of the discourse before us ! How bright is the force of that example to which, at last, he so pointedly refers ! See Phil. ii. 5—11. And how clear and simple is that declaration of the great cardinal doctrine of the gospel, with which the passage closes : *The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for (instead of) many.*

A ransom for many ! A ransom is that which is given or paid as an equivalent for captives to be liberated or returned. Sinners were captives under the power of the law, and the death of Christ is the price of their freedom ; his voluntary and perfect obedience, his life yielded up upon the cross, are accepted in the place of their everlasting punishment, if by a living, obedient, devoted faith, they are one with him, and he with them.—Let us learn, more and more, to value aright this inestimable ransom ; and let us continually seek for this appropriating faith. "Ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

HYMN.

Father, I sing thy wondrous grace ;
I bless my Saviour's name,
He bought salvation for the poor
And bore the sinner's shame.

His deep distress has rais'd us high ;
His duty and his zeal
Fulfill'd the law which mortals broke,
And finish'd all thy will.

This shall his humble followers see
And set their hearts at rest ;
They by his death draw near to thee
And live for ever blest.

Let heav'n, and all that dwell on high,
To God their voices raise,
While lands and seas assist the sky
And join to advance the praise.

§ LXV.

CHAP. XX. 29—34.

Christ giveth two blind men their sight.

29 'And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed them.

30 ¶ And, behold, ^btwo blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace; but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34 So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

^a Mark x. 46. Luke xviii. 35.—^b ch. ix. 27.

Reader.—This miracle is recorded also by St. Mark (x. 46—52) and St. Luke (xviii. 35—43). The narratives of the three Evangelists are substantially the same, with that slight variation in minor circumstances and matters of detail, which

tends to commend the credibility of the writers as independent, yet concurrent, narrators of facts. St. Mark and St. Luke speak of only one blind man upon whom this miracle was wrought; namely, Bartimæus, the son of Timæus. He was probably the one whose case had attracted the greatest notice; and it is evident that the Evangelists, in referring exclusively to his cure, do not deny the fact of a similar miracle having been wrought in favour of another at the same time.—St. Luke says, that the cure was effected as our Saviour drew nigh to Jericho; whereas St. Matthew and St. Mark speak of it as having been performed as our Lord and his disciples departed from that place. This may, perhaps, be rightly regarded as an actual discrepancy in the statements; precisely such as continually takes place where several independent witnesses, between whom there is no collusion or secret understanding, are called upon to bear testimony to a fact. Such persons often differ in their statement on minor points; and yet their evidence, as a whole, establishes the occurrence of the fact, beyond all reasonable doubt.—We may safely assert that if the Evangelists had been artful men, attempting to impose upon us by untrue and fictitious narratives, they would not have suffered such a discrepancy as this to exist upon their pages.

READER. *Two blind men sitting by the way side.*—Bartimæus, says St. Mark, sat by the highway side, *begging*. Such also we may suppose to have been the occupation of his companion. And we may remark, that these two men, in their infirmity and their poverty, present to us a very lively picture of the spiritual condition of all mankind, as partakers in the loss and misery consequent upon the fall of our first parents. We are, by nature, spiritually blind and poor.—Until our minds are enlightened by the word and the Spirit of God, we do not discover the things which belong to our everlasting peace. We are blind to the evil and malignity of sin,—the corruption and deceitfulness of our own hearts,—the dangers by which we are surrounded,—the holiness of God,—the beauty of holiness and its necessity in our own hearts and practice,—and the happiness of that heaven, where holiness is found without alloy and in infinite perfection. It is common indeed, with respect to all these things, for men to say *We see*; but it is certain that, until Christ gives them light, they remain in darkness.—And as men are, by nature, spiritually blind, so they are also spiritually poor. Nay, they are involved in a large and insuperable debt; for they have committed that breach of God's holy and perfect law for which they are utterly unable to make amends. And while sin has made them debtors to divine justice, it has robbed them of all that excellency and goodness

which the Creator originally imparted to their nature. Man, since the fall, is, of himself, destitute of that holiness which forms his best, and highest, and most indispensable goodness. He is born into the world with a corrupt and darkened heart; he grows up to still greater corruption and still further debasement,—and he dies with an immortal spirit void of holiness, happiness, or hope.—Hence then the condition of Bartimæus and his companion, as blind men and as the subjects of distressing poverty, is a pattern of the miserable state of all mankind by nature, if destitute of the gifts of the grace of God.

When they heard that Jesus passed by.—St. Luke makes mention of a circumstance which may be worthy of remark. He says concerning Bartimæus, that "*hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.*" He made use of those faculties which God had mercifully left at his command. And it is our duty to do the same, with regard to spiritual things. "He that hath,"—he that makes a good and honest use of what he does possess,—"*to him shall be given.*" Let us remember this, and consider whether or not we have paid due attention to those striking objects of religious belief and practice which have been, as it were, continually thrust upon our notice from our earliest days. Have we seriously and earnestly asked, *What do these things mean?* Surely it would seem, so to speak, natural, for persons who grow up in a Christian country, to

reason thus,—“ I find myself, from my childhood, incorporated into a society of men professing a common subject of belief as a matter of vital importance. I find this society in possession of a sacred volume containing an express revelation from the God who made me. I find that, from some cause or other, certain religious ordinances have been instituted,—days set apart for religious purposes,—places set apart for religious assemblies,—men set apart to study the word of God and to dispense religious instruction ;—and over all these things there is thrown a shade of sanctity and solemnity which demands my especial attention. Now, what do these things mean ?”—*And they told him,* continues St. Luke, *that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.* Here was intelligence for poor blind Bartimæus ! He learnt that it was no common occasion which had caused the multitude to come together. The people had collected around that wonderful person of whom he had heard so much,—that Jesus of Nazareth who had often opened blind men’s eyes, and who had never shut his ears against a poor man’s prayer. And the wonderful deliverer, whose presence he had so often desired, had at length come near to him, and was now actually passing by !—And here, in a higher sense, is intelligence even for ourselves. In the ordinances and ministrations of religion, Jesus of Nazareth still passeth by. The meaning of our sacred days and places and persons, and of all religious services, is no-

thing less than this :—Jesus of Nazareth, who, by his grace, has opened the eyes of many a blind understanding,—who, in his infinite compassion and mercy, has never shut his ears against the prayer of the destitute, but has imparted to multitudes the riches of his free salvation,—this Jesus of Nazareth still passeth by. Here is the significancy, here is the truth and vitality, of our religion, without which it were a mere empty show. Here is the meaning of every thing connected with it.—What means, for instance, the baptismal font ? Jesus is there to receive members into his church,—to seal the forgiveness of sin to all those who do or shall truly believe in his saving name,—to declare their adoption into the family of God,—and to promise them those spiritual aids and powers, which, duly accepted and employed, will conduct them safely through life’s pilgrimage, to the Canaan of everlasting rest and blessedness.—What means the holy table ? Jesus is there to strengthen and refresh the souls of all who draw near with genuine penitence and lively faith,—to give the assurance of pardon, acceptance, and heavenly favour,—and to bestow those renewed and appropriate graces of the Holy Spirit, whereby the soul of the humble and believing communicant may be endued with increased ability to resist temptation, and to keep the commandments of God.—What means the united supplications and thanksgivings of assembled worshippers ? It is that

wheresoever two or three are met together in the name of Jesus, he is in the midst of them, ready to catch every sincere devotion from every humble heart, and to waft it to the high and holy place, perfumed with the incense of his atoning sacrifice, and his all-availing intercession.—And, lastly, what means the reading and the preaching of the word of God? The voice is the voice of a man, but the language is the language of Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth passeth by, pleading with the profane, and saying, “Why will ye die?”—exhorting the careless, “Awake, thou that sleepest!”—speaking to his obedient people, “This is the way, walk ye in it,”—and saying to one and all, “Look unto me, and be ye saved!”—*Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.*

When the blind men heard that Jesus passed by, they

Cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.—Having been reminded of our Christian privileges, we are here again directed to the exercise of our Christian duty. When Jesus passed by, these blind men sought his mercy and his aid; and if they had neglected to do this, we have no reason to suppose that they would have received their sight. In like manner, it will be to no purpose that the almighty Saviour passes before us in the ordinances of religion, unless we personally apply to him, in a faithful and diligent use of those means of grace. We must use these things, and we must use them with an humble, honest, and faithful

heart; or else we derive no benefit from their institution. For example;—when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we have no reason to take to ourselves the comfortable assurance that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, unless there be in our hearts a sincere sorrow for our manifold transgressions of God's holy law, and a desire (by God's help) to forsake every evil way,—together with humble trust in God's mercy through the merits of the sacrifice which we solemnly commemorate,—and a real purpose to walk, through grace given us, in the way of holy obedience.—And the same may be said concerning every other privilege which we enjoy. What will it avail us that Christ is ready to receive and to present the prayer of the heart, if we pray only with the lips? And what benefit do we derive from the reading or the preaching of the word of God, if it fall upon stony ground, or take root in a scanty soil, or afterwards be choked with thorns?—Let us, then, take a lesson from the conduct of these two blind men. Let us look for a blessing, not in the mere possession, but in the use, of those privileges which, as Christians, we enjoy.

And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace.—Surely they ought rather to have taken these sufferers by the hand, to have led them to Jesus, and to have mingled in their supplications, saying, “Lord, have mercy on these our needy brethren!” And such also, in a spiritual sense, is the duty

ST. MATTHEW XX. 29—34.

of professing Christians in the present day. If they see a fellow-creature in earnest respecting the attainment of salvation,—if they see a man attempting to make use of the day of grace, while the blessed Redeemer, full of mercy, love, and power, is passing by,—a man seriously endeavouring to become a partaker of those spiritual blessings which the son of David is ready to dispense,—then surely it is their duty, a duty which ought to be most welcome to their hearts,—not to throw a stumblingblock in the way of such an one, not to hinder him in making choice of that good part which may never be taken from him,—but rather to assist him in that choice, to encourage him, to lead him on his road to heaven, and to commend him in their prayers to the grace of God.—But, alas, how often is the opposite course pursued! In how many cases does the conduct of the baptized world towards humble Christians resemble that of the multitude towards the two blind men at Jericho!

But they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. Here again is the Christian's pattern. Let the scorn and contempt of the world incite him to redouble his diligence in seeking after the Lord. Let him study, in all things, to give no offence; let him invariably mingle good will to men with his love to God;—and when the world rebukes him, let him cry so much the more, saying, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David.*

And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.—How lovely and delightful is the compassion of Christ, in contrast with the rebuke and despitelness of the world! The merciful Redeemer, far from joining with the multitude in commanding the blind men to hold their peace, took notice of their application, and spoke to them in a tone of kindness and encouragement. And thus it continues to be. If any man, with humble boldness and a lively faith, sends up from his heart that prayer, *Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me;*—if any man, convinced of his spiritual blindness and poverty and need, seeks the supply of his wants from the good Physician of the soul,—that man shall in no wise be cast off or sent empty away. The world may rebuke him and command him to hold his peace; but Jesus will give him encouragement, and command him to tell forth all his wants. And he will make it appear, that, while as the Saviour of the world, he passes before all and is accessible to all alike, he has also for those who faithfully apply to him, an especial inquiry,—involving a peculiar offer of kindness,—*What will ye that I shall do unto you?*—Again and again, by emblems the most significant, and by declarations the most solemn and explicit, the Scriptures make known to us the readiness of the Redeemer to receive and to bless all those who come to him in faith.

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 1—11.

It was in faith that these blind men made their application to Jesus ; which appears from their addressing him as the son of David, and thus acknowledging him as the Messiah ; and also from the Saviour's reply to Bartimæus,—*Thy faith hath saved thee.* Let us thankfully accept the Redeemer's invitations, and faithfully apply to him in the spirit and with the prayer of Bartimæus and his companion, in the full assurance that our prayers will be favourably heard, and our wants abundantly supplied. Let us place our whole trust and confidence in Him as being both willing and able to save to the uttermost. And let us resign ourselves wholly into his hands to be saved in the way of Divine appointment,—submitting to his teaching, as our Prophet,—relying entirely on his atonement and intercession, as our Priest,—and studying diligently, through grace given, to obey his laws as our King. So shall we receive a blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation.

So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes : and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him. The Lord Jesus not only took notice of these afflicted men, and offered them his aid, but he actually conferred on them the blessing they desired. St. Luke says concerning Bartimæus, that *he followed Him, glorifying God.* Thus also every disciple of Jesus, who has become sensible of the value of salvation, and enjoys a personal interest in the Redeemer's

work, will follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, and will glorify God in his body and in his spirit, which are God's. *And all the people,*—all those, at least, who know how to estimate the work which has been wrought in the case of such a man, will be affected by it as the people of Jericho were affected by the sight of our Saviour's miracle, who, *when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

HYMN.

Author of faith, to thee I cry,
To thee who wouldst not have me die
But know the truth and live ;
Open my eyes to see thy face,
Work in my heart thy saving grace,
And life eternal give.

Shut up in unbelief I groan,
And blindly serve a God unknown,
Till thou the veil remove ;
Thy gift unspeakable impart,
And write my name upon my heart,
And manifest thy love.

I know the work is only thine,
The gift of faith is all divine ;
But if on thee we call,
Thou wilt the benefit bestow,
And give us hearts to feel and know
That thou hast died for all.

C. WESLEY.

§ LXVI.

CHAP. XXI. 1—11.

Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

AND 'when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto 'the mount

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 1—11.

of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them* and bring *them* unto me.

3 And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them: and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 'Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

6 'And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, 'Hosanna to the son of David: 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

2 L

10 'And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus 'the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

c Isaiah lxli. 11. Zech. ix. 9. John xii. 15.—d Mark xi. 4.—e 2 Kings ix. 13.—f See Lev. xxiii. 40. 1 Mac. xii. 31. &c. 2 Mac. x. 7. John xii. 15.—g Psalm cxviii. 26.—h Psalm cxviii. 26. ch. xxiii. 29.—i Mark xi. 15. Luke xix. 45. John ii. 13, 15.—k ch. ii. 23. Luke vii. 16. John vi. 14; & vii. 40; & ix. 17.

Reader.—We find the substance of this narrative again in Mark xi. 1—11, Luke xix. 29—44, and John xii. 12—15. St. Matthew is the only Evangelist who mentions both the ass and the colt; the others speak of the colt only, probably because it was this on which our Saviour rode.—The actions of the multitude were designed as tokens of respect and rejoicing, according to oriental custom. See 2 Kings ix. 13. Lev. xxiii. 40. Hosanna is a Syriac word, used as a form of acclamation; it means, Save now, or Save, I beseech thee!

READER. The holy Evangelist supplies us with a most emphatic commentary upon the transaction here recorded, by referring us to a prediction of the prophet Zechariah (xi. 9), and leading us to meditate upon its fulfilment. *All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and (or rather, yea even) a colt the foal of an ass.* By

265

this event, and the record of it, our minds are directed to the contemplation of the meekness, or humility and condescension, of the Lord Jesus Christ in his dealings with the church. The earthly Jerusalem, or daughter of Sion, is a type or picture of the spiritual city of God, the company of all true believers; and the meekness of Jesus on the occasion here recorded is a token of his gentleness and tenderness in seeking and gaining an entrance to the souls of his believing people in all ages.

Several reflections, of a pleasing and profitable kind, may arise from our contemplation of this meekness of the Lord Jesus. It reminds us, for example, that he comes to us in peace, and in love, and with a view not to erect a temporal throne, but to set up a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom distinguished not by earthly pomp and power, but by righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The lowly Jesus comes to us *in peace*. He might have come, as the Lord from heaven, in wrath and righteous indignation. He might have descended with terrors greater than those of Sinai, and have filled every guilty heart with fear and trembling at his presence. A fire might have gone before him and have burnt up his enemies on every side; and the whole creation, mared and polluted by sin, might have been constrained to lift up a voice of lamentation and mourning and woe at the presence of offended Deity. But the Lord did not thus

clothe himself with terror when he came to sojourn upon earth. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He came as the Prince of peace. Place yourselves, in imagination, within the walls of Jerusalem, and listen to the announcement, "Behold, thy king cometh unto thee!" Guilty city,—thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that be sent unto thee,—behold, thy king cometh! You may ask, perhaps, How does he come? In what manner, and for what purpose, is the king of heaven approaching this city of the haughty and hypocritical Pharisee, the unbelieving Sadducee, the profane and extortionate publican, the licentious sinner of every degree? Is he not coming "with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among men of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him?" But the answer is, Not so. He is coming in a meek and lowly form: he is advancing with every demonstration of friendship and peace!—In this respect, the Lord Jesus Christ comes to us now in his gospel, by his word and by his Spirit, just as he advanced towards Jerusalem of old. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;"—not dealing with his offending creatures according to their iniquities, and vindicating the honour of his laws by

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 1—11.

visiting every transgressor with merited punishment, but proclaiming his mercy, and offering reconciliation, and seeking to establish a covenant of peace. And, in the meekness with which he comes,—in the foolishness of preaching which she choose to employ,—in the simplicity of those signs and pledges of his grace which he has chosen to appoint,—and in the spirit of kindness, charity, and moderation which all churches are bound to exercise toward each other and all mankind,—we may discover plain and striking indications of the peaceful character of his mission and designs.

Again. The meekness of the Saviour is also a manifestation of his *love*.—Contemplate the blessed Jesus as he draws nigh to Jerusalem, “meek and riding upon an ass, yea, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.” He has laid aside the tokens of his majesty. If the eye of a mortal man were to behold this king in his beauty, surrounded by his heavenly splendour and the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, that man would fall at his feet as dead,—his heart would be overwhelmed with terror even by the presence and the apprehension of such transcendent greatness. But the Lord Jesus Christ emptied himself of his glory, and made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man. And still, notwithstanding his exaltation, he appears before us, in the gospel, man as well as God,—not only our Maker and

Redeemer, but our brother and our friend. Shrouding his glory beneath the veil of human nature, he is accessible, more than ever, to our reverent and tranquil contemplation; and not only so, but he reveals himself expressly as a High-Priest who was in all points tempted like as we are (yet without sin), and who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Would we behold a further proof and indication of redeeming love? Still let us contemplate the meek and lowly Jesus in his approach towards Jerusalem. When he came near the city, “he wept over it,” bewailing its impenitence, and its impending ruin. And thus the humility with which Christ comes to us, in the gospel, displays the Divine love to man not only as a poor, weak creature, standing at an infinite distance from God’s majesty and greatness,—but also to man as the heir of sorrow,—to man as the destroyer of his own peace,—to man in the mournful condition of a sinner.

Nor is this all. We have not yet considered the depth of our Lord’s humility, or the extent of his Divine compassion. Not only does the Redeemer, by his tears, make it appear that he is not willing that any should perish, but he also reveals himself to us, by his work, as willing rather that the sinner should be saved. Let us view him once more in his approach towards Jerusalem: “Behold, thy king cometh unto thee.” Yes. He advances thither not only clothed in

human nature,—not only weeping over men's sins and misery,—but he goes to die for those sins and to give his life a ransom for many. We have read his own declaration to this effect in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses of the foregoing chapter. All other steps of our Saviour's descent from his throne of glory were designed and adapted to conduct him to this, the lowest of them all, his suffering of death upon the cross. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ approach Jerusalem without any display of his Divine majesty or his almighty power? Why, when the traitor came to seize him, did he refuse to call unto his Father, who could have presently sent unto him more than twelve legions of angels? It was that the Scripture might be fulfilled, that thus it behoved Christ to suffer! It was that no impediment or obstacle should arise between the will of God the Father and the voluntary obedience of God the Son in human nature, about to present himself as a full and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. "Lo, I come, to fulfil thy will, O God. I am content to do it; yea, thy law is within my heart."—Consider, then, the love of God, as it is displayed to us in the humiliation of Christ, the king of Zion. When Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, the Jews said, "Behold, how he loved him!" But while we regard him as divested of his glory, and stripped, as it were, of his attributes of greatness and sovereignty

and power, in order that he might make his soul an offering for sin, how can we find language to express the thought which must take possession of our souls, Behold, how he loved us! How great and generous and free, how complete and commanding, how deep and persevering, his compassion and tender concern for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness and the shadow of death!

Again. We recognize in the history before us, as I have already said, a token and a proof of *the spirituality of the gospel dispensation*. The Lord Jesus draws near to Jerusalem, not only without the terrors of offended Deity,—not only divested of the majesty and glory of God over all, blessed for ever,—but he comes without even the ensigns of royalty, without the weapons of temporal warfare, without any thing which, according to the customs of the world, may serve to mark his authority or to render him illustrious. "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee;"—not armed with the temporal sword, or adorned with the blazonry of earthly honours, but,—“meek and riding upon an ass, yea, even a colt the foal of an ass.”

It is thus that the Lord Jesus Christ still makes his approaches to the soul of man. The weapons of his warfare are not carnal. He does not appeal to temporal motives: he trusts not to secular display. He makes no parade of human philosophy or learning, in seek-

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 1—11.

ing to win the soul. No. He comes as the meek and lowly Jesus. His claims and his promises alike are spiritual. The substance of his argument is the cross on which he died; the substance of his promise is the heaven in which he dwells. His kingdom is not of this world. His law is the law of love; and his reward is the happiness of sanctified affections, and the manifestation of the favour and approbation of God. He shows us his lowly birth and his humble life,—he points to his bleeding cross and to his open tomb,—and he sets at nought the pomp of ceremonial and the parade of rhetoric and the ingenuity of argument, while yet he addresses us in a voice more powerful than all others, and reveals to us a spectacle more imposing and more edifying than all besides, proclaiming that God is love, and saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!” And, in like manner, passing by human arguments and motives to godliness and virtue, he challenges attention to the value and destiny of the immortal soul, and calls for a heavenly mind and holy conversation. Pomp and ceremony, and the boast of antiquity, and the pride of reason, and the show of worldly wisdom, and the supposed merit or efficacy of self-inflicted pain and needless austerities,—these things he leaves in the hands of craft, superstition, idolatry, and error. And he founds upon his own great work of suffering that powerful appeal, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole

world and lose his own soul?”—and that comprehensive claim, “If ye then be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” The believer is conscious of the force of this appeal, and the power of this claim. He counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; and he feels, in some degree, as St. Paul felt when he exclaimed, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

“Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king *cometh unto thee.*” Yes: it is not the soul of fallen man that makes the first advances towards God, but it is God in Christ who first makes his approach unto the soul. It is God who stoops down from heaven to take hold of man in his lost condition, not man who, in his pride and folly, is able to ascend to God. And it is still the gracious pleasure of the Lord Jesus Christ to draw near to the soul of his redeemed, so to speak, in great humility. He comes to it, not in the clouds of heaven,—not with the sound of terror or the display of pomp,—but he comes to it with the simple declaration of what he has done and suffered on its behalf,—he comes to it in the foolishness of preaching,—he comes to it in the voice of conscience, or with the gentle whispers of his Holy Spirit,—he comes to it in the mild example of his own most holy life,

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 1—11.

or of his people's godly conversation ; or, as his most awful method of approach, he comes to it in the bare announcement of a judgment which has not yet been set, and of those terrors of his wrath which have not yet begun to be revealed. Still, then, he comes to us in great humility and meekness. And herein we may continue to find a declaration of peace, and a message of love, and a demonstration of the spiritual nature of the claim which is made upon our hearts.

And who is it that thus meekly approaches us, in the gospel, as the messenger of peace, and the herald of love, and the bearer of unearthly, spiritual, claims? It is the lawful sovereign of our souls. "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, *thy king* cometh unto thee!" He demands the cheerful submission of our minds and hearts, and requires us to do him homage by the obedience of our lives. And his reward is with him. He comes, not to impoverish the soul, but to enrich it; not to make it wretched, but to fill it with peace and joy;—not to enslave it, but to make it free,—to break off the iron yoke of spiritual bondage, and to lay on it that easy yoke and that light burden which may be to it a token of emancipation, a badge of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The Lord Jesus Christ appears before the soul in peace, with his heart full of love, and his hand rich with blessings. He demands admission into our hearts, and claims the exercise of his rightful sovereignty, not only

that his Father may be glorified, and that he may himself rejoice in us, but also that our joy may be full,—that we may become partakers of that blessedness which no other inmate and occupant of the soul is able to bestow.

Our happiness, as Christians, consists in a dutiful reception, and a willing entertainment, of this our heavenly King. Let us welcome his gracious approach with humility, faith, and love. So shall we be able to declare, with thankfulness and joy, in the words of the beloved disciple, "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." And; having thus yielded to the authority of our Lord and Saviour during this mortal life, in which he came to visit us in great humility, it will be our unspeakable happiness to awake up hereafter and behold his face with joy, when he shall come again, in his glorious majesty, to judge the living and the dead.

PSALM XLV.

My Saviour and my King,
Thy beauties are divine ;
Thy lips with blessings overflow
And every grace is thine.

Now make thy glory known,
Gird on thy mighty sword,
And ride in majesty to spread
The conquests of thy word.

O Lord, subdue thy foes,
Or melt their hearts t' obey ;
While justice, meekness, grace, and truth
Attend thy glorious way.

Thy laws, O God, are right ;
Thy throne shall ever stand ;
And thy victorious Gospel proves
A sceptre in thy hand.

WATTS.

§ LXVII.

CHAP. XXI. 12—22.

Christ driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple; and curseth the fruitless leafy tree.

12 ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

13 And said unto them, It is written, "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased,

16 And said unto him, Hearst thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

18 ' Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19 ' And when he saw † a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

20 ' And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, "If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.

†—Mark xi. 11. Luke xix. 45. John ii. 15.—m Deut. xiv. 28.—n Isaiah lvi. 7.—o Jer. vii. 11. Mark xi. 17. Luke xix. 46.—p Psalm viii. 2.—q Mark xi. 11. John xi. 18.—r Mark xi. 12.—s Mark xi. 13. † Gr. *one fig tree.*—t Mark xi. 20.—u ch. xvii. 20. Luke xvii. 6.—v James i. 6.—w 1 Cor. xiii. 2.—x ch. vii. 7. Mark xi. 24. Luke xi. 9. James v. 16. † John iii. 22; & v. 14.

Reader.—The temple, probably in the outer court or court of the Gentiles, had been grievously profaned by having been made a place of traffic, by men of a worldly mind. The money-changers were probably those who exchanged the Roman coin, then in general use, for the

Jewish half shekel which was demanded by the law as an annual tribute from every man above twenty years of age. This may have been, to a certain extent, merely a matter of convenience; but the exchange was also perhaps made a matter of extortion and unjust gain. The doves were required for offerings. And the fault of these traffickers may perhaps rightly be regarded as two-fold; first, that of carrying on a trade, lawful in itself, under improper circumstances, and without due regard to the sanctity of the place in which they stationed themselves; and, secondly, that of taking undue advantage of the ignorance or necessity of those with whom they dealt, and of practising fraud and extortion.

The fig tree, which our Lord sentenced to destruction, was standing not only in the way, but as the words may rather be rendered, "*on the road side,*"—where its fruit was public property, and could lawfully be taken by any passenger. It disappointed the expectations which may have been formed respecting its produce at the time of our Lord's visit, because, as one Evangelist remarks, "the time of figs was not yet," i. e. the time of gathering figs, the harvest of that fruit, had not yet arrived.

READER. *Jesus went into the temple of God.* How speedily he made it appear that "he must be

about his Father's business" and that it was his "meat and drink to do his Father's will." How regular was his attendance, at proper seasons, in the places of appointed worship, the synagogue and the temple.—Very remarkable also is this history as a fulfilment of Mal. iii. 1—4, and Haggai ii. 6—9.

In casting the buyers and sellers out of the temple our Lord appears to have exercised his Divine power; for we can hardly suppose that a number of men would have submitted in this instance to one who did not manifest some signs of authority, or exert some act of power, beyond that of an indignant, although just, rebuke. We have here a striking and edifying example of the Divine hatred of impiety and all iniquity, and of that majestic power by which all that is unholy will be finally overthrown and destroyed. Hence, too, let us learn how grievous in the sight of heaven is that one particular offence, too often committed, alas, in all ages of the world,—a profanation of sacred things. The desecration of holy seasons, and holy places, and sacred services, is a sad demonstration of a heart not right with God. Whether it be wilful and insolent, or merely arising from want of consideration and thought, it reveals, at the very least, a want of reverence for the Divine presence, and the absence of a tender conscience and of an humble mind. No false or superstitious respect for things sacred is demanded, or even permitted, by the spirit of the Gospel; but the right

and reverent use of such things, as distinguished from impious abuse or profane neglect, is entirely in accordance with Christian obligation and temper. While we hallow God's sabbaths, let us also reverence his sanctuary. Let us partake in the feelings of the pious patriarch at Bethel, when he exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Nor let us despise or forget that exhortation of the wise man which is directed against vanities in Divine service, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil."

The reference made by our blessed Lord to the words of Isaiah is remarkably appropriate and instructive. It teaches us how to respect the place of Divine worship, whether we regard its services in the light of a duty, or view them as one of our most valuable privileges. And this becomes more apparent if we consider the words of Isaiah in their original connection, forming, as they do, part of a prophecy which includes a reference to gospel times, and the services of spiritual worshippers under the gospel dispensation. "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make

them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer, for all people." Isaiah lvi. 6, 7.—Surely then a due reverence for God's holy day, and for the courts of holy worship, is no merely Jewish or legal institution,—nothing intended merely for the followers of Moses, and for those who were in bondage under the elements of the law;—but it is something demanded by Christ himself, the spiritual lawgiver, of true and acceptable worshippers in all ages of the church.

Ye have made it a den of thieves.
Men may invent smooth names for the profanation of sacred things in the Christian church, but in vain. If ecclesiastical extortion, and avarice, and mercenary motives, and fraudulent practices, and a more regard to filthy lucre prevail within the borders of any church, then, in matters not by what style or title such church may be called,—whether it be ancient or modern, Romish or Protestant, established or nonconformist, episcopal, presbyterian, or independent,—but whatever be its name or its pretensions among men, it is, in the sight of Christ, so far as relates to the partakers in that worldly spirit and those base transactions, *a den of thieves*. Are there no buyers and sellers in the temple at the present day? May the love of mammon and of the wages of unrighteousness be cast out of their hearts, before it be too late, and they themselves be rejected for

ever from the church of God! When will our patrons, our clergy, and our people learn the full meaning of that saying, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts?"

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. Even so, heal us, Lord Jesus,—the blind and the lame,—spiritually ignorant and decrepid,—when we draw near unto thee by faith in thy house of prayer!

And when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosannah to the son of David, they were sore displeased.—Why had not these teachers and guardians of religion conceived some indignation against those buyers and sellers who had really profaned the temple by their iniquitous practices? Alas, they are ready to vent their displeasure where it is not deserved, and to act in apparent defence of religion where their interference is little needed; but how poor a substitution is this for an honest and enlightened zeal in the cause of truth and in the service of their God! Would that religious zeal, as it is called, were always worthy of its name, and always directed to a proper end! And let us learn, from the example before us, a lesson respecting the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the dangers by which we are surrounded. Simplicity of holy purpose, and an humble heart, as well as real undissembled charity towards all men, are indispensably requisite

to preserve professors of religion in the path of duty, even when they find themselves zealously affected in an apparently good cause. When true unaffected piety and an upright intention are wanting, into what self-contradictions and awful impieties may not the most zealous fall! How offensive in the sight of heaven may their conduct be, even while they are loudly exclaiming, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we!" These chief priests and scribes were negligent and indifferent about real corruptions and abuses in the church, but very indignant on the appearance of an irregular piety or uncanonical zeal. They were sore displeased; *and said unto him*,—appealing to Christ himself, be it observed (which has often been done since), for a confirmation of their ecclesiastical censure, *Hearst thou what these say?* Men often delude themselves by supposing that Christ himself is ready to take their part in suppressing some forms or modes of worship which they are ready to condemn. But the only way to have Christ on our side is first to range ourselves on his, in all simplicity of faith, in truth, in humility, meekness, and brotherly love.

And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? The reference is to the eighth Psalm, which is quoted several times in the New Testament as prophetic of the Messiah. How encouraging the thought that the praises of the feeblest and the young-

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 12—22.

est, if offered with simplicity of heart, are acceptable to him who is made head over all things to his church! Children and men of guileless minds are fitted to sing Hosannah to the son of David. See chap. xviii. 1—6.

In the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered. The Lord Jesus, as he was truly man, so he partook of all the sinless infirmities of human nature. He hungered, and thirsted, and was weary, as we are. He was made "in all things like unto his brethern, yet without sin."

And when he saw a fig tree in the way by the road side, he came to it,— hereby denoting that reasonable expectation of finding fruit, which men might have been led to form under such circumstances,—*and found nothing thereon but leaves only,—and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.*—

The practical lesson which our Lord immediatly deduced from this circumstance, and which was occasioned by the remark of his disciples concerning the punctual fulfilment of his sentence, is that of faith in God, especially with reference to the answer of our prayers. He taught them that the power of faith in prayer would lead to still more striking and important results than that which they had just witnessed. "To remove a mountain" means, according to a figure then in common use among the Jews, to overcome a difficulty. When difficulties arise, or meet us in our path, let us remember this word of encouragement and promise. Every thing

which may threaten to obstruct us in the path of duty or in our way to heaven will certainly be overcome by the exertion of almighty power on our behalf, if we are men of faith and prayer.

All things which we ask in prayer we shall receive,—provided only, according to the limitations elsewhere described, that the grant of such things is consistent with the will of God, that we ask as true believers in the name of Christ, and that we are living in the exercise of love and charity towards our brethren, and in conscientious obedience to all the commandments of God.

We cannot help regarding this history of the barren fig tree as adapted also to convey instruction of a more general kind. "The fruitless leafy tree" is an apt emblem of the empty professor of religion, who says, Lord, Lord, but neglects to do the things which the Lord commands. Profession without practice in religion, is like leaves without fruit. All may appear green and flourishing to the eye of a distant beholder; but, to him who comes seeking fruit, all is worthless and unsatisfactory, because no fruit appears. Words without works, the appearance without the reality, the form without the substance, are an abomination in the sight of God, and render a man subject to a severe rebuke corresponding to that which our Saviour addressed to the fruitless tree. "He that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." If a Christian have only the leaves of

ST. MATTHEW XXI. 23—32.

form or profession, the time will come when he will be stripped even of that showy covering, and left as a bare and withered trunk, a monument of the power of Divine displeasure, and a warning to all intelligent creatures who profess allegiance to their maker. May we be continually partakers of that heavenly grace and succour whereby we may be enabled not only to make a good profession of our faith before men, but also to bring forth those fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of God by Jesus Christ! "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing. To shew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Ps. xcii. 12—15. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Psalm l. 5.

PSALM XCII.

Lord, 'tis a pleasant thing to stand
In gardens planted by thine hand;
Let me within thy courts be seen
Like a young cedar fresh and green.

There grow thy saints in faith and love,
Blest with thine influence from above:
Not Lebanon with all its trees,
Yields such a comely sight as these.

The plants of grace shall ever live;
(Nature decays, but grace must thrive);

Time that does all things else impair
Still makes them flourish strong and fair.

Laden with fruits of age they show
The Lord is holy, just, and true;
None that attend his gates shall find
A God unfaithful or unkind.

WATTS.

§ LXVIII.

CHAP. XXI. 23—32.

Christ putteth to silence the priests and elders, and rebuketh them by the similitude of the two sons.

23 ¶ "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, by what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?"

24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

28 ¶ But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

29 ' He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, ' Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: ^e but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when he had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

^e Mark xi. 27. Luke xx. 1.—^b Exodus ii. 14. Acts iv. 7; & vii. 27.—^c ch. xiv. 5. Mark vi. 20. Luke xx. 6.—^d Eccles. xix. 21.—^e Luke vii. 29, 30.—^f ch. iii. 1, &c.—^g Luke iii. 12, 13.

Reader.—The former part of this section is repeated, with no important variation, by St. Mark (xi. 27—33,) and St. Luke (xx. 1—8).

Both the narrative and the parable are expressed in terms so plain and simple as to render any verbal explanation needless.

READER. By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? This question, considered in itself, was good and proper. But it was proposed in a captious spirit; not with a view of ascertaining the truth, but in the hope of entangling Jesus in his discourse, and finding matter of accusation or objection. It is right that we should seek for information respecting the authority, character, and mission of our blessed Lord; and that we should, as it were, bring our inquiries on this important subject to the written word. But let us remember that it is our duty to enter upon this investigation with all humility and simplicity of mind, and with a sincere desire of knowing and yielding to the truth. It is possible and easy to enter upon such questions in a very unbecoming frame of mind,—irreverently, with a design to establish our own preconceived opinions in spite of evidence to the contrary, in the unhallowed spirit of bitter and uncharitable controversy, or with a proud design of establishing the conclusions of our own weak and erring reason. In such cases, we must not expect to learn the truth: our judgment may be baffled and perplexed, or our errors may be confirmed,—but we shall not attain

the light of truth and find a blessing from our God.

They answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.—In reply to the question of these captious and dishonest men, our blessed Lord proposed another inquiry to themselves which it was not convenient to them to answer. And why not convenient? Because they were time-serving men, anxious not so much to uphold and declare the truth, as to retain their interest with the people. How wretched and how contemptible (so to speak) is the situation of men who are indifferent to the cause of truth and holiness, and are eager in the pursuit of their own fancied interest, and in the execution of their own selfish schemes! How far more honourable, as well as more happy, is the love of truth than the love of self! Let the shame and defeat of the crafty Jews in the history before us tend to determine, or to establish, our choice in favour of "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are lovely, and of good report." We have a good practical comment upon this transaction in those words of our blessed Lord which have already engaged our attention in the sixth chapter of this Gospel;—"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

A certain man had two sons.—By this parable our Saviour intended to contrast, in the first instance, the character and conduct of those chief priests and elders who made loud professions of zeal for God's honour and of sincerity in his service, but yet after all refused to hear and obey the Messiah whom God had sent, with the opposite behaviour of those persons who had been apparently, and even really and culpably, indifferent with regard to matters of religion, but yet humbly received the message which was sent to them, and, having repented of their evil ways, conformed themselves to the commands of Christ. But the parable applies, with no less certainty and force, to men of every country and every age. It holds up to our view the practice of religion, even though tardy and late, as better and more precious in the sight of God than a long and loud profession without a corresponding practice. "The one son," says an old writer, "is an image of the penitent, the other of the hypocrite; the one a deed without a show, the other a show without a deed."

He came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he repented, and went.—It is indeed a great provocation to Almighty God, and a most awful affront put upon his Divine majesty, when any of his intelligent creatures resists, for a moment, the indication of his will. Who can declare the amount of guilt incurred by a rebellious worm of earth, who

practically replies to his Maker's commands, "I will not?" Great indeed is the offence, and dreadful the consequences that must ensue, if simple justice were to take its course. But great are the mercy and forbearance of God. He does not immediately deal with men after their sins, nor reward them according to their transgressions. He gives space for repentance. He is slow to anger; and he pleads, as it were, again and again with rebellious and offending men, saying, Why will ye die? He receives the ungrateful and impious reply, "I will not;"—and yet he mercifully renews his commands, mingled even with entreaties and messages of love! "Knowest thou not," says an Apostle, "that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Such is its tendency, and such is its design.—In the parable before us, that merciful design was most happily fulfilled. The son said, "I will not;"—and then a space of time was given him, in which he might return to a better mind. That precious opportunity was wisely and properly employed. "Afterward he repented and went." He reflected upon his past conduct, and thought seriously of his present position with regard to his offended father. Perhaps the very boldness and insolence of his reply contributed to establish his better purpose; and he sought by zealous and thorough compliance with his father's will to show his detestation of his original offence. At all events, although his first reply was wrong, his subsequent

practice was dutiful and right.—And it is often thus with respect to sinners and their God. They say, We will not obey his commands. They act in a spirit of contemptuous opposition to his holy will, and with a bold and daring defiance of his authority and power. They sin with a high hand and boast themselves in their iniquity; saying in effect, Who is the Lord, that we should serve him? But God gives them time, and grace; and they repent. They turn to the service of Him whom they had hitherto despised. And not only so, but it often happens that these very men are the most active and zealous in performing the will of God. They are aroused, by the recollection of their past ingratitude and rebellion, and by a lively sense of the Divine forbearance and mercy, to an unusual degree of vigour and activity in religious obedience. They feel themselves bound to do more than others in God's service, as they were once more bold than others in opposition to his will. Alas! it is not always that the bold offender becomes the willing and zealous servant of his God. Too often the profane and sensual go on in their evil course, growing worse and worse, and treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath. But yet, when any, through grace given, and making a wise use of time granted, do indeed repent and turn to God,—He will remember their iniquity no more, and, for Christ's sake, he will regard them only as those who do his will.

And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Here is the example of a ready profession of obedience, followed by actual disobedience;—allegiance in word, but rebellion in deed. This son gave a dutiful and promising reply to his father; which, as far as it went, was satisfactory to both parties. But perhaps it was too satisfactory to the son himself. Either he designed to give fair words and no more, and was satisfied when he had silenced the voice of parental authority by specious promises which he never intended to fulfil: or perhaps, he really had some thought of executing the task imposed when he made the promise, but afterwards he was so well pleased with himself for having made that satisfactory assurance, and for having excited the approbation of his father, that he delayed from moment to moment, and at length entirely neglected, the most important and substantial part of his duty;—hoping, it may be, that his good intention would be accepted instead of his good service. Such is a picture of what often takes place in the visible church of Christ. There are many persons who make loud professions of religious zeal, and repeat, in public and in private, many promises of religious obedience. They say, I go, sir. But then here they stop. They sink into a state of apathy and indifference when they ought to be at work in the fulfilment of religious duties. Either they are mere hypocrites or unbelievers, who hope to

deceive God or to impose upon men by their religious professions, and neither wish for nor aim at anything more; or else they are men who deceive their own selves, and are enticed from their duty and happiness, by means of a self complacent reliance on their good professions, and a proud comparison of their own case with that of others who refuse to promise so largely as themselves. Some men rest in religious vows and religious ordinances as ends, instead of regarding them merely as promises and means. They make a false estimate of their position and their duty; and seem to think that they have done something, instead of remembering that they have only been promising and preparing to do it. Alas, if men will attach any value to any thing which appertains to themselves, it is as easy for them to set a high price upon their words as upon their deeds! And here is a delusion in which Satan and the world will readily assist them. They will soon begin to think much of having said, I go, sir, while one and another, on their right hand and on their left, were boldly declaring, "I will not." How fatal the delusion if they are finally satisfied with congratulating themselves and condemning their brethren, instead of actually rendering obedience to God! Let us guard against this folly. In a sense of the Divine mercies through Christ Jesus our Lord, let us promise to obey; and, relying on the indispensable succours of heavenly grace, let us faithfully endeavour to act in

accordance with our profession. Let us consider the parable before us as a lively illustration of our Saviour's declaration, "Not every one that *saieth* unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven." And let us continually look up, with all humility and faith, to him who alone can put good desires into our hearts and can enable us to bring those desires to good effect.

HYMN.

Father, to thee my soul I lift,
My soul on thee depends,
Convinc'd that every perfect gift
From thee alone descends.
Mercy and grace are thine alone,
And pow'r and wisdom too ;
Without the Spirit of thy Son
We nothing good can do.

We cannot speak one useful word,
One holy thought conceive,
Unless in answer to our Lord,
Thyself the blessing give.
His blood demands the purchas'd grace,—
His blood's availing plea
Obtain'd the help for all our race,
And sends it down to me.

Thou all our works in us hast wrought,
Our good is all divine ;
The praise of every virtuous thought,
Or righteous work, is thine.
From thee, through Jesus, we receive
The pow'r on thee to call,
In whom we are, and move, and live,
Our God is All in all.

C. WESLEY.

§ LXIX.

CHAP. XXI. 33—46.

Parable of the Vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen.

33 ¶ Hear another parable : There was a certain household-er, [^] which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and ['] went into a far country.

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, [^] that they might receive the fruits of it.

35 ['] And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first : and they did unto them likewise.

37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, " This is the heir ; ["] come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39 [°] And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

40 When the lord therefore of

the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen ?

41 ' They say unto him, ' He will miserably destroy those wicked men, ' and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, ' Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner : this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ?

43 Therefore say I unto you, ' The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And whosoever " shall fall on this stone shall be broken : but on whomsoever it shall fall, " it will grind him to powder.

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because ' they took him for a prophet.

—A Psalm lxxx 9. Cant. viii. 11. Isaiah v. 1. Jer. ii. 21. Mark xvi. 7. Luke xx. 9.—f ch. xxv. 14, 15.—A Cant. viii. 11, 12.—f 2 Chr. xli. 21; & xxxvi. 16. Neh. ix. 28. ch. v. 12; & xxiii. 54, 57. Acts vii. 52. 1 Thess. ii. 16. Heb. xi. 26, 37.—g Psalm ii. 4. Heb. i. 2.—h Psalm ii. 2. ch. xxvi. 3; & xxvii. 1. John xi. 53. Acts iv. 27.—i ch. xxvi. 50, &c. Mark xiv. 46, &c. Luke xxii. 54, &c. John xviii. 12, &c. Acts ii. 23.—p See Luke xx. 16.—q Luke xxi. 24. Heb. ii. 3.—r Acts xiii. 46; & xv. 7; & xviii. 6; & xxviii. 28. Rom. ix. & x. & xi.—s Ps. cxviii. 22. Isaiah xxviii. 16. Mark xii. 10. Luke xx. 17. Acts iv. 11. Eph. ii. 20. 1 Peter ii. 6, 7.—t ch. viii. 12.—u Isaiah viii. 14, 15. Zech. xii. 3. Luke xx. 18. Rom. ix. 33. 1 Peter ii. 8.—v Isaiah ix. 12. Daniel ii. 44.—y ver. 11. Luke vii. 16. John vii. 40.

Reader.—This parable was doubtless designed, in the first instance, to foretel the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, consequent upon the rejection of the Messiah by the ungrateful and wicked rulers of God's ancient church and people. But it is adapted also to convey instruction to the Christian church, and to every individual professor of religion. The following interpretation will serve as a key to the parable, considered in both these points of view. With reference to the case of the Jews, "The Householder denotes the Supreme Being;—the Vineyard, the Jewish Nation and Church;—the Fence, the Divine protection;—the Winepress, the Law and Sacrificial Rites;—the Tower, the Temple, in which the Divine presence was manifested;—the Husbandmen, the Priests and Doctors of the Law;—Went from home, i. e. entrusted the cultivation of the vineyard (the oversight and instruction of the church) to the husbandmen (the priests, &c.), as a man would do who had the most trusty servants and was obliged to absent himself from home for a certain time;"—the Servants sent, the prophets whom God raised up from time to time;—the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.—If we regard the parable in its especial application to the state of things under the Gospel dispensation, we may probably conceive of the Householder as representing the Lord Jesus Christ;—the Vineyard, the visible professing church;—the Fence, winepress, and tower, religious ordinances;—the Husband-

men, ministers of the Gospel;—the Servants sent, Apostles and Evangelists and the sacred writings;—the Son sent last of all, the Holy Spirit, with his gifts and graces, whom Christ sent unto his church from the Father;—the Householder going from home, the ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven;—the Householder returning, the Lord coming again to judge the world.—Perhaps the analogy does not hold so exactly in this case as in the former; and there can be no doubt that the application to the Jews is in accordance with the primary and immediate intention of the parable.—Again, there is another application, of a personal and practical kind, which may perhaps present to our minds the most just and profitable view of the secondary meaning of this instructive parable. The Householder is the Lord Jesus Christ;—the Vineyard, the Gospel dispensation, the whole state and circumstances of professing Christians, including their religious privileges and their religious duties;—the Householder going into a far country, the Lord Jesus ascending into heaven, and retiring from the visible government and management of the church;—the Husbandmen, individual Christians;—the Servants sent from time to time, the Apostles, Evangelists, the Holy Scriptures and all faithful ministers of the Gospel;—the Son, the Spirit of the Son, the grace with which he accompanies the ministration of his word;—the fruits to be rendered, holy tempers and holy lives;—the beating and ill-treatment of the servants, the

neglect of holy Scripture and the persecution and contempt of faithful ministers;—the Householder's return, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to judgment.

The quotation in verse 42, is from Psalm cxviii. 22, 23. These words refer in their primary and more limited sense to David; but in a secondary signification, more extensive and complete, to David's Lord. "As the church," says one, "is represented in Scripture under the name of the Temple and House of God, in allusion to the temple of Jerusalem, which was a type of it, (1 Cor. iii. 16; Heb. iii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5)—so Jesus Christ is represented as the foundation on which this edifice is laid (1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 20, 21).—The builders denote the chief priests and elders of the people, with the doctors of the law.—The expression concerning the rejection of the stone is borrowed from the practice of masons, who, having found a stone, and having tried it in a particular place for which it appears improper, throw it aside and take another; but at last it may happen that the very stone which had been before rejected, may be found the most suitable as the head stone of the corner.—The passage, as applied by our Lord to himself, contains an abridgment of the whole doctrine of the Gospel.—1. The Lord's peculiar work is astonishingly manifested in the mission of Jesus Christ.—2. He, being rejected and crucified by the Jews, became an atonement for the sin of the world.—3. He was raised again

from the dead, a proof of his conquest over death and sin, and a pledge of immortality to his followers.—4. He was constituted the foundation on which the salvation of mankind rests, and the corner stone which unites Jews and Gentiles,—beautifies, strengthens, and completes the whole building, as the head stone, or uppermost stone in the corner, does the whole edifice.—5. He is hereby rendered the object of the joy and admiration of all his followers, and the glory of man. ‘This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.’”

Verse 44, is supposed to contain an allusion to the custom of stoning as a Jewish punishment. On occasion of such executions, we are told, “a scaffold was erected, twice the height of the man who was to be stoned. From the edge of this scaffold he was violently struck off by one of the witnesses; if he died by the blow and the fall, nothing further was done; but if not, a heavy stone was thrown down on him, which at once killed him. (The stone thus thrown on the culprit was, in some cases, as much as two men could lift up.) So the Saviour speaks of the falling of the stone upon his enemies. They who reject him, oppose him, and continue impenitent, shall be crushed by him in the day of judgment, and perish for ever.”

READER.—Hear another parable.
This appears to have been framed,
284

to a certain extent, upon the model of that recorded in Isaiah v. 1—7. Both are adapted to remind us of our possession of invaluable privileges and means of grace,—of the goodness of God in imparting them to us,—and of the just punishment which certainly awaits our unthankful neglect or abuse of them. Well indeed may the Lord say, in the words of the prophet, “What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?” Most justly does he “look that it should bring forth grapes,” and expect “to receive the fruits of it.” And who is it, after all, that derives the benefit, when the fruits are duly rendered? None but the creature, who, through grace given, makes the acceptable offering! God is not debtor to man, in any sense whatever. Our goodness extendeth not to him; nor is He the gainer by our services.—How great are our Christian privileges;—we live in that spiritual vineyard which has been planted, fenced, and furnished by an heavenly husbandman and friend! How rich is the grace of God,—the root which he plants in the soul is indeed the choicest vine! How great and irreparable will be our loss, if, having refused to render the fruits of faith and holy obedience, we should be at length cast out of the sacred enclosure, and banished for ever from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!

“The church of Christ,” says Quesnel, “is his Vineyard, planted by his own hand; and, although

he is absent in visible presence from his church, yet he is always present by his protection, by his spiritual abiding, and by the Holy Ghost.—Jesus Christ requires the produce of his gifts, the fruit of his mysteries and his blood, from those unto whom his graces are dispensed. Death, in the midst of undischarged duty, is a terrible stroke; and not to anticipate this awful state argues the absence of faith.—God demands especially from his ministers the fruit of his vineyard; and they outrage the Holy Spirit when they pervert their office to personal advantage, and live in sloth and self-indulgence, without labouring in the vineyard.—The Holy Scriptures are as it were the other servants who are sent to warn of duty, and to demand its diligent discharge; and it too frequently occurs that they are entreated shamefully. But woe to that unfaithful servant, and especially to that selfish and negligent minister, who rejects counsel, or receives it in an angry spirit, whether given directly by God or by the instrumentality of good men, whether conveyed through the medium of words or of example!

“Jesus Christ himself, the heir, is too often sacrificed to avarice, ambition, and passion. How many there are who thus “crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,” by an unblushing preference of pleasure and interest to duty, and by the unjust persecution of those who rebuke them by maintaining their own fidelity! But

the punishment will be dreadful. The judge, the Lord of the vineyard, cometh; and who shall abide his wrath, his presence, his look! He will destroy those perverse and rebellious husbandmen, and give the vineyard unto others. Despair will lay hold upon them,—separated from the church, cut off from Jesus Christ, and given up to the wrath of an avenging God.”

The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. “To whom coming,” says St. Peter, “as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter ii. 4, 5, (see also verses 6—8). “The church is the temple of God. Jesus Christ is its corner stone and foundation. He binds and sustains all its parts, and it is by faith in him that we are as stones in that living temple, that we subsist in him, and are savingly united to him.—It was in the order of the Divine designs that this stone should be despised, mutilated, and rejected, before it could become the bond and glory of the church. How precious is that faith which enables us to behold in Jesus Christ such majesty and such marvellous characters, while to the carnal mind he is an object of contempt, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence!—What avails it to the Christian that his creed distinguishes him from the Jew, if the lowliness of the Gospel, and the

ST. MATTHEW XXII. 1—14.

salutary vigour of Gospel truth, become to him through the hardness of his heart, occasions of sin! It is through Divine grace and compassion that we have not been given up to our natural blindness and hardness of heart. Subdue in us, O Lord, every remnant of that hard and stubborn spirit which may still be setting itself in opposition to the truth of thy word and the power of thy grace!"

Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Well may we exclaim, in the language of our church, Oh, terrible voice of most just judgment! Then shall it be too late to cry for mercy when it is the time for judgment! The best commentary upon these solemn words of our Saviour may be found in the eighth chapter of Isaiah, to which allusion is evidently made. "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and *I will look for him.*" Isaiah viii. 13—17. Let us remember, for our guidance, encouragement and comfort, "that *unto them that look for him shall he appear*

the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews ix. 28.

PSALM CXVIII.

See what a living stone
The builders did refuse;
Yet God hath built his church thereon
In spite of envious Jews.

The scribe and angry priest
Reject thine only Son;
Yet on this rock shall Zion rest
As the chief corner stone.

The work, O Lord, is thine,
And wondrous in our eyes,
This day declares it all divine,
This day did Jesus rise.

This is the glorious day
That our Redeemer made;
Let us rejoice, and sing, and pray,
Let all the church be glad.

Hosannah to the King
Of David's royal blood;
Bless him, ye saints; he comes to bring
Salvation from your God.

We bless thine holy word
Which all this grace displays
And offer on thy altar, Lord,
Our sacrifice of praise.

§ LXX.

CHAP. XXII. 1—14.

The parable of the King who made a marriage feast for his son.

AND Jesus answered * and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden

ST. MATTHEW XXII. 1—14.

to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: ^a my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth ^c his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not ^d worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and ^e gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 ¶ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man ^f which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* ^g into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 ^h For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

^a Luke xiv. 16. Rev. xix. 7, 9—^b Prov. ix. 2.—^c Dan. ix. 26. Luke xix. 27.—^d ch. x. 11, 18. Acts xiii. 46.—^e ch. xiii. 28, 47.—^f 2 Cor. v. 3. Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10, 12. Rev. iii. 4; & xvi. 16; & xix. 8.—^g ch. viii. 12.—^h ch. xx. 16.

Reader.—This parable, in its primary signification, relates to the rejection of the Jews, who had abused their religious privileges, and the calling of the Gentiles through the mercy and grace of God. At the same time, it is adapted to impart instruction to all those who have received the calls and offers of the Gospel, and have thus been invited to partake of everlasting happiness in the world to come. The following remarks may tend to explain the general scope and meaning of the parable. “The king means the great God. His Son, the Lord Jesus. The marriage feast, the economy of the Gospel, during which men are invited to partake of the blessings purchased by, and consequent on, the incarnation and death of our blessed Lord.—By those who had been bidden or invited are meant the Jews in general, who were invited

ST. MATTHEW XXII. 1—14.

to believe in and receive the promised Messiah. By the Servants, we are to understand the first preachers of the Gospel, proclaiming salvation to the Jews. John the Baptist and the seventy disciples may be here particularly intended.—By the other servants, ver. 4, the Apostles seem to be meant, who, though they were to preach the Gospel to the whole world, yet were to begin at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 47) with the first offers of mercy.—By their making light of it, is pointed out their neglect of this salvation.—By injuriously using some, and slaying others, of his servants, is pointed out the persecution raised against the Apostles by the Jews, in which some of them were martyred. By sending forth his troops is meant the commission given to the Romans against Judæa, and by burning up their city the total destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the son of Vespasian,—an event which is to be regarded as a type or shadow of the punishment which will hereafter be inflicted upon all those who neglect and oppose the Gospel.

Regarding the parable in its more general application to professing Christians, we may consider it as pointing out three several descriptions of persons who fail to partake of the blessings of the Gospel, and render themselves liable to Divine displeasure on account of their refusal to accept the proffered mercy. “The first,” says Quesnel, “is the instance of an easy, idle, and voluptuous existence, distinguished by the tranquil enjoyment of life,

health, property, society, friends, family, good cheer, public diversions,—in short, the life of a respectable man of the world.—The second is that of a man absorbed in business, money transactions, affairs of the world and lucrative engagements,—in whom the desire and labour of acquisition stifle the thoughts of salvation and leave no time for the pursuits of eternity.—The third case is that of the openly unjust, violent and outrageous; sinners by profession, and in the eye of the world; and not only negligent of the great concern, but fierce against those who warn them of the truth.”

The allusions to eastern practices and customs which the parable contains are, for the most part, obvious and easily understood. The wedding garment mentioned in verse 11, and the blame incurred by the guest who appeared at the table without one, imply a reference to certain customs which are not perhaps generally known, but which ought to be taken into account in order to understand the full meaning and force of the latter portion of the parable. “Among the orientals, long white robes were worn at public festivals; and persons who appeared on such occasions with any other garments were esteemed not only highly culpable, but worthy of punishment. The person who invited the guests prepared such a garment for each, for the time being; and he was furnished with it on his application to the ruler of the feast. It was this which made

the conduct of the person mentioned in the text inexcusable; he might have had a proper marriage garment if he had applied for it.—Among the Asiatics, garments called caftans, great numbers of which every nobleman has ordinarily ready in his wardrobe, are given to persons whom he wishes to honour; and to refuse to accept or wear such a dress would be deemed the highest insult.”

It seems probable that our Lord, in delivering this parable, had in view Zephaniah i. 7, 8, “Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, *he hath bid his guests*. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the kings children, and *all such as are clothed with strange apparel*.”—In fact, the figure here employed is common, both in the Sacred Scriptures, and in rabbinical writings. The parable, in its leading features, is repeated in Luke xiv. 16—24.

READER.—*The kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the Gospel dispensation, is like unto a certain king which made a marriage, i. e. a marriage feast, for his son.—This certain king, the master of the feast, denotes Almighty God, our heavenly Father. He is the originator or author of the Gospel, with all its blessings. The rich provision which has been made for our salvation is the produce of his almighty power, his infinite wisdom,

his unbounded goodness, and of his tender mercy, free grace, and unmerited favour towards lost and helpless man. The Gospel which we are invited to receive, is “the Gospel of the grace of God.”

The Gospel is here compared to a *marriage feast*, or, as St. Luke expresses it, a *great supper*. This is a very significant and appropriate figure; and it is one which the Holy Spirit, in condescension to our infirmity, and a view to our edification and comfort, has frequently employed in Holy Scripture. See especially Prov. ix. 1—5; and Isa. xxv. 6; lv. 1, 2.

Let us consider what are those good things of which the soul of a believer partakes in the Gospel feast.—One most distinguishing part of this divine and spiritual banquet is, the body and blood of Christ, the bread of God, the bread of life; in other words, the perfect work and most precious sacrifice of the Saviour of the world, which, being the object of humble and lively faith, becomes the nourishment and the delight of the believer’s soul. “Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” When a man habitually, with an humble and confiding heart, reposes his hope of forgiveness and acceptance with God upon the sacrifice, righteousness, and intercession of the Redeemer,—then he feeds on Christ, and by the enjoyment of this spiritual food and

ST. MATTHEW XXII. 1—14.

sustenance his soul is strengthened and refreshed. Nor is this happy effect of true and lively faith at any time more complete, or more rich with its accustomed blessing, than when it is exercised in the use of religious ordinances, and especially in connection with the appointed commemoration of the Saviour's death in the holy Supper. If, while we eat the bread and drink the wine, we also discern the Lord's body which those elements are intended to represent to our minds,—that is to say, if we exercise faith in the crucified Redeemer, truly repenting of our sins, and humbly desiring pardon and grace for Christ's sake,—then do we, in an especial manner, enjoy the fulfilment of that saying, "He hath filled the hungry with good things."—Again, the soul of a believer is refreshed by drinking of the richly flowing streams of Divine grace. "Living water springing up unto eternal life" is an important part of the provision made in the spiritual banquet of the Gospel. Believers in Christ are partakers of God's Spirit. They know that the blessed influence of this Divine agent has been purchased for them by the sufferings of Christ, and is now dispensed by him from his throne of glory. They pray for these graces, seek for them, prize them, cherish them. They receive them continually from time to time; and find in them no mean part of the heavenly banquet provided by the sovereign Lord, the bountiful dispenser of all good. And often are these brethren

of Christ's family, holy and beloved, partakers of the heavenly gift, constrained to exclaim, as it were, in the language of the Psalmist, "There be many that say who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."—Besides this, the soul of an humble believer feeds, as it were, upon all the rich promises which are scattered up and down throughout the word of God. He is nourished and refreshed with the blessed hope of everlasting life. And many are the elements of happiness in his possession and within his reach, which are to his spiritual perception what the provisions of a richly furnished table are to the guests at a noble entertainment. As the pleasure of agreeable society is one recommendation of an earthly feast, so the delight of spiritual intercourse with believing brethren,—in one word, the communion of saints,—is an ingredient in the satisfaction of those who have accepted the gracious invitation of the master of the Gospel banquet. Nor must it be forgotten that all the peace and joy which a faithful Christian can experience during his abode on earth, is no more than a slight foretaste of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for ever, and of which he hopes to partake hereafter, together with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the company of the redeemed.—Truly then, in many points of view, the kingdom of

ST. MATTHEW XXII. 1—14.

heaven is like unto a marriage feast.

Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.—Such is a representation of the offers and invitations of divine mercy as they are continually addressed to men in the pages of the Gospel, and by all ministers who faithfully deliver the message contained in the written word.—Nor is this language addressed merely to a few; but, as St. Luke especially reminds us, the guests invited to partake of the great supper are *many*. Great is the marriage supper of the king, and *many* are the bidden guests.—But let us consider especially the message which the servants are commissioned to deliver.—“All things are ready,—come unto the marriage!” Or, as it is in St. Luke, “Come, for all things are now ready.” How clear a delineation of the message which is continually delivered to ourselves in the Gospel! God tells us, by his Spirit with his word and his ministers, that all things necessary for our salvation and happiness are now ready: and He mercifully invites us to come to him and to partake of the provision which has been so liberally made. All things are ready. *Pardon* is ready for those who repent them truly of their sins past;—for it has been purchased by the Redeemer’s blood; and “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation

for our sins.”—*Righteousness and acceptance with God* are ready;—for all Christ’s people are accepted in him who is himself the beloved of the Father.—*Peace* is ready; for it is the gift of Christ; and he gives it, not as the world gives,—he bestows it, such as the world can neither give nor take away,—and, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Holiness* is ready, by the operation of Divine grace upon the heart;—for the ascended Saviour claims, on behalf of his people, the fulfilment of that promise, “I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.”—And, lastly, *Heaven* is ready;—for the Lord Jesus himself declared, “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” “And we know,” says St. Paul, “that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

And, as the Gospel thus assures us that all things are now ready, so also it conveys to us, one and all, an earnest invitation to partake of the spiritual and eternal blessings which have been so graciously provided. “Come, for all things are now ready.” See also Isa. lv. 1; and Rev. xxii. 17.—With a deep sense of Divine love and grace,—under a full conviction of our misery

and need,—and in the name of Christ,—let us continually repair to the bountiful giver of all good, seeking pardon, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and receiving at his hands the fulfilment of his promises in the supply of our need, the support of our weakness, and the grant of eternal life.

But in what manner was the summons received by the persons in the parable?—It is said, *they would not come*;—*they made light of it*;—and, as St. Luke says, *they all with one consent began to make excuse!*—Men sometimes find excuses for not embracing that real, spiritual, practical religion which is not according to their taste. Some men, indeed, when they are bidden to the heavenly feast, say plainly, ‘We will not come. Religion does not suit us. We do not choose to comply with its demands. We do not value, or we do not believe, its promises. We are resolved to go on in that contrary way which appears to us far better. We *will not* comply with the demands of the Gospel.’ These are bold sinners; and it is to be feared that too many such are to be found in our own day and generation. They set themselves in open opposition to the authority of God, and even abuse and persecute the messengers of his mercy. God grant that none of us may ever be numbered among these daring workers of iniquity,—these reckless votaries of pleasure or the world! But there are others, who like the persons in the parable before us, merely *make light* of the invitation, or say, ‘We cannot come.’

They are not so bold as to give a plain and positive refusal. They profess that they are willing to accept the gracious offer; and they promise, and perhaps hope, that, at some future time, they will comply with it. But then they say also that, for the present, there is some difficulty or impediment in the way, by which they are hindered and kept back. They begin to make excuse. They are so courted by pleasure, or so burdened with care, or so oppressed by want, or so controlled by the solicitations, example, or influence of friends, or, in some way or other, they are placed in so unfortunate and difficult a position,—that it is quite impossible for them, at present, to turn from their vain or sinful course of life, and to give their hearts to God. Alas! the Bible contains a thousand warnings, instructions, and entreaties, which ought to convince such men how little their excuses will avail before God! And even slight reflection may reveal to us the large amount of folly, weakness, and guilt which such excuses certainly involve.—And yet these excuses are often very plausible, and are sometimes founded upon worldly occupations and engagements, which, in themselves, are lawful. Some of the men in the parable *went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise*; and in St. Luke they are represented as making these occupations a plea for their absence from the supper.—Let us beware, and seek continually for Divine grace, lest the common and lawful occupations of life should become stum-

ST. MATTHEW XXII. 1—14.

bling-blocks in our way to heaven,—means of keeping us back from faith in the Redeemer, from our exercise of Christian duty, from the enjoyment of Gospel privileges, from the service, the favour, and the presence of our God.

But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth.—Some persons seem to imagine that God is so merciful, that he either cannot, or will not, punish sin, and be angry with the sinner. But this is not what the Bible teaches. To abuse God's mercy is to provoke his righteous indignation,—it is to draw upon ourselves a certain and an awful punishment. He who swore in his wrath, concerning thankless and rebellious Israel, that they should not enter into his rest, will one day punish with everlasting destruction from his presence all those who, under any pretence whatever, will not accept and obey the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage.—When the Jews, as a nation, had rejected Gospel mercy, then the offers of that mercy were sent to the Gentiles. These offers have been conveyed even to ourselves, in this distant region of the earth. And the commission which has been given to the ministers of the Gospel, and to the means of instruction and grace, with reference to ourselves, is (to adopt the language of St. Luke) Compel them to come in! Compel them, not by persecution and force, but by persuasion and entreaty,—urge them by a demonstration of the

truth, by declaring the love of God in Christ, by announcing the richness of the feast (the value of salvation), and the largeness of the offer (the freeness of God's grace),—press upon them all the motives of the Gospel, and remind them of those happy multitudes who have already entered in and received the blessing. By all wise and lawful means compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and we know what follows. “Let every one examine himself, and take care that he sit not down as a privileged guest, without the fitting preparation,—the wedding garment. Faith gives admission to the feast; and love and holiness, which are the life and work of faith, prepare the soul for the celestial nourishment. Happy the man who thus receives the bounties of his Lord; but wretched he who, charged and conscious stricken, sits speechless and condemned! Dreadful is the state of that man on whom the Lord Jesus shall pass sentence of eternal darkness, and hopeless exile from the blessings of religion, and the mercies of God!” May none of us be found among those who, having abused and resisted the grace and mercy of the Gospel, will be at last shut out for ever from the happiness of heaven!

PSALM IV.

Know that the Lord divides his saints
From all the tribes of men beside;
He hears the cry of penitents,
And pardons, for his Son who died!

When our obedient hands have done
A thousand works of righteousness,
We put our trust in God alone
And glory in his pard'ning grace.

Let the unthinking many say
Who will bestow some earthly good ?
Lord, for thy light and love we pray,
Our souls desire thine heav'nly food.

Then shall my cheerful pow'rs rejoice
At grace and favours so divine :
Nor will I change my happy choice
For all their corn and all their wine.

WATTS.

§ LXXI.

CHAP. XXII. 15—33.

*Tribute ought to be paid to Cæsar.
Christ confuteth the Sadducees for the
resurrection.*

15 ¶ Then went the Phari-
sees, and took counsel how they
might entangle him in *his* talk.

16 And they sent out unto
him their disciples with the
Herodians, saying, Master, we
know that thou art true, and
teachest the way of God in
truth, neither carest thou for
any *man*: for thou regardest
not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What
thinkest thou? Is it lawful to
give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

18 But Jesus perceived their
wickedness, and said, Why
tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites?

19 Shew me the tribute mo-

ney. And they brought unto
him a 'penny.

20 And he saith unto them,
Whose is this image and 'su-
perscription?

21 They say unto him, Cæ-
sar's. Then saith he unto
them, 'Render therefore unto
Cæsar the things which are Cæ-
sar's; and unto God the things
that are God's.

22 When they had heard
these words, they marvelled, and
left him, and went their way.

23 ¶ The same day came to
him the Sadducees, " which say
that their is no resurrection,
and asked him,

24 Saying, Master, " Moses
said, if a man die, having no
children, his brother shall marry
his wife, and raise up seed unto
his brother.

25 " Now there were with us
seven brethren: and the first,
when he had married a wife,
deceased, and, having no issue,
left his wife unto his brother:

26 Likewise the second also,
and the third, unto the † se-
venth.

27 And last of all the wo-
man died also.

28 Therefore in the resur-
rection whose wife shall she be
of the seven? for they all had
her.

29 Jesus answered and said

unto them, Ye do err, 'not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but 'are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, 'they were astonished at his doctrine.

† Mark xii. 13.—Luke xx. 20.—‡ In value sevenpence halfpenny. ch. xx. 2.—§ Or, inscription.—k ch. xvii. 26. Rom. xiii. 7.—l Mark xii. 18. Luke xx. 27.—m Acts xiii. 8.—n Deut. xxv. 5.—o Tob. iii. 8.—† Gr. seven.—p John xx. 9.—q † John iii. 2.—r Ex. iii. 6. 16. Mark xii. 26. Luke xx. 37. Acts vii. 52. Heb. xi. 16.—s ch. vii. 28.

Reader. There is but little difficulty in the way of a clear understanding of the meaning of the several portions of this passage.—It may be remarked that Tiberius was the Cæsar, or emperor of Rome, at the time when our Lord gave this memorable answer concerning duty to the civil government. The coin on which the head of the emperor was struck, together with an appropriate inscription or legend, was the Roman denarius.—The law to which reference is made in ver. 24, is found in Deut. xxv. 5; and the expression to "raise up seed unto his brother" means, that the children of the se-

cond marriage should be reckoned in the genealogy, or among the posterity, of the deceased brother.—With respect to ver. 32, it must be remembered that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead several hundred years when God said to Moses 'I am their God;' and the point to be considered is that God said not *I was* their God, (i. e. while they lived) but *I am* their God (now),—whence it follows that they had not been destroyed or blotted out of existence. They lived unto God—within his view and under his protection.

READER.—*Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*—"This answer," it has been well said, "is full of consummate wisdom. It establishes the limits, regulates the rights, and distinguishes the jurisdiction of the two empires of heaven and earth. The image of princes stamped on their coin denotes that temporal things belong to their government. The image of God stamped on the soul denotes that all its faculties and powers belong to the Most High, and should be employed in his service.

"But, while the earth is agitated and distracted with the question of political rights and wrongs, the reader will naturally ask, What does a man owe to Cæsar?—to the civil government under which he lives? Our Lord has answered that question—That which is Cæsar's. But, what is

it that is Cæsar's?—1. Honour. 2. Obedience. 3. Tribute.—1. The civil government under which a man lives, and by which he is protected, demands his honour and reverence. 2. The laws, which are made for the suppression of evil doers and the maintenance of good order, which are calculated to promote the benefit of the whole, and the comfort of the individual, should be religiously obeyed. 3. The government, that charges itself with the support and defence of the whole, should have its unavoidable expenses, however great, repaid by the people in whose behalf they are incurred; therefore we should pay tribute.—But remember, if Cæsar should intrude into the things of God, coin a new creed, or broach a new gospel, and affect to rule the conscience while he rules the state, in these things Cæsar is not to be obeyed; he is taking the things of God, and he must not get them. Give not therefore God's things to Cæsar, and give not Cæsar's things to God. That which belongs to the commonwealth should, on no account whatever, be devoted to religious uses; and let no man think that he has pleased God by giving that to charitable or religious uses which he has purloined from the state."

When they had heard these words they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.—They had approached our Lord with great malice, and with no less art, propounding a very insidious and dangerous question, by answering which they expected that he would give them a ground of

accusation and complaint. The Divine Redeemer, who knew the hearts of all, exposed the hypocrisy and malice of these wicked men, and made it evident that he knew their evil and iniquitous designs.—How completely were they covered with confusion by the answer they received! How disgraceful was their retreat from the Saviour's presence! Vice is a cowardly thing; it wants courage just because it has no ground of confidence in itself, or in other men, and still less in God. Against its will, it is often obliged to render public homage to godliness and virtue. And it is doomed to partake of infamy and disgrace at last.

In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.—The unbelieving Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead (Acts xxiii. 6, 8),—proposed what they regarded as a case of extreme difficulty in connection with the rejected doctrine. But it is evident that the difficulty lay, not in the doctrine itself, but in the addition which they chose to make or imagine,—viz. that it would involve a continuation of institutions which are in fact temporary and carnal. Even marriage, so far as it partakes of that fleeting and gross nature, will disappear. The children of God, who have lived together in the holy estate of matrimony in this world, if they recognize each other hereafter in the state of eternal blessedness, will rejoice together as kindred spirits of the just made

perfect, and as being united by a bond more close and more enduring than any earthly tie. The more fragile and imperfect relation will be superseded by the better and more indissoluble union which will then have been cemented.

As touching the resurrection of the dead.—How important is this article of our Christian faith! A right and firm belief of this leading truth will contribute greatly, under the Divine blessing, to our activity in God's service,—to our support under worldly trouble and calamity,—and to our comfort on the bed of death.—“If a man die shall he live again?” A devout study of Holy Scripture, and a sanctified knowledge of God and his almighty power, will conduct us to a right and satisfactory answer to this most interesting inquiry. If we err on this great and fundamental point, it is because we do not know the Scriptures and the power of God.—Thanks be to him who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel!—*God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* What a word of encouragement,—of warning,—and of consolation!

When the multitude heard this they were astonished at his doctrine. “God uses the infidelity of some for the edification of others. Had no false doctrine been broached in the world, we had not seen the full evidence of the true teaching. The opposition of deists and infidels has served to raise up men in behalf of the truth of God, who not only have

refuted them, but shown at the same time that the sacred testimonies are infinitely amiable in themselves, and worthy of all acceptance. Truth always gains by being opposed.”

HYMN.

Oh for the eye of faith Divine
To pierce beyond the grave,
To see that Friend and call him mine,
Whose arm is strong to save!

Behold my glorious Leader nigh,
My Lord, my Saviour, lives;
Before him death's pale terrors fly,
And my faint heart revives.

Lord, I commit my soul to Thee;
Accept the sacred trust;
Receive this nobler part of me,
And watch the sleeping dust.

Till Thou shalt in thy glory come,
When all thy saints shall rise,
And, cloth'd in full immortal bloom,
Attend Thee to the skies.

STEELE.

§ LXXII.

CHAP. XXII. 34—46.

Christ answereth the Lawyer which is the first and great commandment.—He asks the Pharisees their opinion of the Messiah, and confounds them.

34 ¶ ‘But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, *which was* “a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law ?

37 Jesus said unto him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 'On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41 ¶ 'While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ ? whose son is he ? They say unto him, *The son of David.*

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit ^b call him Lord, saying,

44 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool ?

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son ?

46 'And no man was able to answer him a word, 'neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions.*

^f Mark xii. 28.—^g Luke x. 26.—^h Deut. vi. 5 ; & x. 12. ; & xxx. 6. Luke x. 27.—ⁱ Lev. xix. 18. ch. xix. 19. Mark xii. 31. Luke x. 27. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14. Jam. ii. 8.—^j ch. vii. 12. 1 Tim. i. 5.—^k Mark xii. 26. Luke xx. 41.—^l Ecclus. ii. 10.—^m Psalm cx. 1. Acts ii. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 26. Heb. i. 13. ; & x. 12. 18.—ⁿ Luke xiv. 6.—^o Mark xii. 34. Luke xx. 40.

Reader. We can find no difficulty in answering the question by which the Pharisees were confounded.—We well know that the Messiah was David's Lord, according to his Divine nature, although he was his son, or descendant, according to the flesh.—David in spirit, or by the spirit, i. e. by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, called him Lord or sovereign, Psalm cx. 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is at once "*the root and the offspring of David.*" Rev. xxii. 16. May we say unto him, with deep humility and practical faith, as in the words of Thomas, "My Lord and my God !"

READER.—*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* God does not account or accept of any thing we can offer him, if we give not the heart with it ; and he will have none of that neither, unless he have it all ; and it is a poor all when we have given it for the great God to accept of. If one of us had the affection of a hundred, yea, of all the men in the world, yet he could not love God answerable to his full worth and goodness : all the glorified spirits, angels, and men, that are or shall be in their perfection, loving him with the utmost extent of their souls, do not altogether make up such love as he deserves ; yet he is pleased to require our heart and the love we have to bestow upon him. And though it is infinitely due as a debt,

yet he will take it as a gift; "My son, give me thy heart."—Therefore the soul that begins to offer itself to him, although overwhelmed with the sense of its own unworthiness, and the meanness of its love, yet may say, Lord, I am ashamed of this gift I bring thee, yet because thou callest for it such as it is, here it is; the heart, and all the love I have, I offer unto thee, and had I ten thousand times more it should all be thine; as much as I can I love thee, and I desire to be able to love thee more; although I am unworthy to be admitted to love, yet thou art most worthy to be loved by me, and besides, thou dost allow, yea, commandest me to love thee: my loving of thee adds nothing to thee, but it makes me happy; and though it be true that the love and heart I offer thee is infinitely too little for thee, yet there is nothing besides thee enough for it.—LEIGHTON.*

* This quotation from Abp. Leighton, in its adaptation to this part of the sacred text, reminds me that I have hitherto given but a very limited accomplishment to a part of my original design,—to introduce into this Commentary a number of valuable passages from the works of our old and standard Divines. In the course of my reading, I have admired and marked many such passages, combining great energy and beauty, and proofs of a solid judgment and large experience, with deep piety and profound scriptural research. Perhaps no greater service can be done to families and individuals in the present day than by furnishing them with a collection of such extracts in close and appropriate connection with Holy Scripture. A treasure of undoubted value, and rarely accessible to general readers, may thus be amassed. The favourable reception of my "Churchman's Companion, a Selection of passages from British Divines adapted to various portions of the Book of Common Prayer," has contributed to fix my determination of making such compilation a distinctive feature of the present work. Accordingly, it will henceforth be my aim to adapt some of the choicest passages of our British Divines to successive portions of the New Testament.

This is the first and great commandment.—It is so, *in its antiquity*, being as old as the world, and engraven originally on our very nature:—*in dignity*, as directly and immediately proceeding from and referring to God:—*in excellence*, being the commandment of the New Covenant, and the very spirit of the Divine adoption:—*in justice*, because it alone renders to God his due, prefers him before all things, and secures to him his proper rank in relation to them:—*in sufficiency*, being in itself capable of making men holy in this life, and happy in the other:—*in fruitfulness*, because it is the root of all commandments and the fulfilling of the Law:—*in virtue and efficacy*, because by this alone God reigns in the heart of man, and man is united to God:—*in extent*, leaving nothing to the creature which it does not refer to the Creator:—*in necessity*, being absolutely indispensable:—*in duration*, being ever to be continued on earth, and never to be discontinued in heaven.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The love of our neighbour springs from the love of God as its source; it is found in the love of God as its principle, pattern, and end; and the love of God is found in the love of our neighbour, as its effect, representation, and infallible mark. This love of our neighbour is a love of equity, charity, succour, and benevolence. We owe to our neighbour what we have a right to expect from him. "Do unto all
299

men as ye would they should do unto you," is a positive command of our blessed Saviour. By this rule, therefore, we should think, speak, and write, concerning every soul of man; putting the best construction upon all the words and actions of our neighbour that they can possibly bear. By this rule we are taught to bear with, love, and forgive him; to rejoice in his felicity, mourn in his adversity, desire and delight in his prosperity, and promote it to the utmost of our power; instruct his ignorance, help him in his weakness, and risk even our own life for his sake, and for the public good. In a word, we must do every thing in our power, under all possible varieties of circumstances, for our neighbours, which we would wish them to do for us, were our situations reversed.

This is the religion of Jesus. How happy would society be, were these two plain, rational precepts properly observed! *Love ME, and love thy FELLOWS.* Be unutterably happy in me, and be in perfect peace, unanimity, and love among yourselves.—Great Fountain and Dispenser of Love! fill thy creation with this sacred principle, for his sake who died for the salvation of mankind!—AD. CLARKE.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.—O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee: Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.—LITURGY.

The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David calleth him My Lord for a double reason; by a spirit of prophecy, as foreseeing his incarnation and nativity out of the tribe of Judah and stock of Jesse; and so he was David's son; and by a spirit of faith, as believing him to be his redeemer and salvation; and so he was David's Lord. "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son"—there we see his incarnation and descent from David; "and shall call his name Immanuel" God with us, Isa. vii. 14,—there we see his dominion over David. As man he was his son; as Mediator, he was his Lord. As man, he was subject unto Mary his mother; as Mediator, he was the Lord and Saviour of his mother, Luke ii. 51; i. 46, 47. As man, he was made for a little while lower than the angels, that he might suffer death; but as Mediator, God and man in one person, he was made much better than the angels, all the angels of God were his subjects, to worship him, and his ministers, to wait upon him, Heb. ii. 7, 9; i. 4, 6, 7.

ST. MATTHEW XXIII. 1—12.

If Christ then be our Lord, we must trust in him and depend upon him for all our present subsistence, and future expectation. He never faileth those that wait on him. "He that believeth in him shall not be ashamed." Rom. ix. 23. And indeed, though every man call him Lord, yet no man does in truth and sincerity of heart so esteem him, but those who do in this manner serve him, and by faith walk after him.—REYNOLDS.

HYMN.

Infinite excellence is thine
Thou glorious Prince of grace!
Thy uncreated beauties shine
With never-fading rays.

Sinners, from earth's remotest end,
Come bending at thy feet;
To thee their pray'rs and songs ascend,
In thee their wishes meet.

Millions of happy spirits live
On thy exhaustless store;
From thee they all their bliss receive
And still thou givest more.

Thou art their triumph and their joy,
They find their all in Thee;
Thy glories will their tongues employ
Through all eternity.

§ LXXIII.

CHAP. XXIII. 1—12.

Christ admonisheth the people to follow the good doctrine, not the evil example, of the Scribes and Pharisees. His disciples must beware of their ambition.

THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying, "The scribes and

the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for 'they say, and do not.

4 'For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 But 'all their works they do for to be seen of men: 'they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

6 'And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

8 'But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no *man* your father upon earth: 'for one is your Father which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master *even* Christ.

11 But 'he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 'And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and

he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

a Neh viii. 4. b Mal. ii. 7. Mark xii. 38. Luke xx. 45.—c Rom. ii. 19, &c.—d Luke xi. 46. Acts xv. 10 Gal. vi. 13.—e ch. vi. 1, 2, 5, 16.—f Numb. xv. 38. Deut. vi. 8; & xxii. 12. Prov. iii. 3.—g Mark xii. 38, 39. Luke xi. 43; & xx. 46.—h John 9.—i Jam. iii. 1. See 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3.—j Mal. i. 6.—k ch. xx. 26, 27.—l Job xxii. 29. Prov. xv. 33.; & xxix. 23. Luke xiv. 11.; & xviii. 14. Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.

Reader. The phylacteries here mentioned were small slips of parchment or vellum, on which were written certain portions of the Old Testament,—usually Exod. xiii. 1—10, 11—16; Deut. vi. 6—9; xi. 13—21. They were worn on the arm or forehead; and the Pharisees, in wearing them of larger dimensions than other men, pretended to exhibit a greater reverence and esteem for the Law. “The borders of the garments” were the fringes, which Jews were required to wear, in order to distinguish them from other nations, and to serve as a memento of their obligation to obey the commandments of God, even in the most minute particular.—The three titles Rabbi (Teacher), Father, and Master, were claimed, or greedily assumed, by the Scribes and Pharisees, who loved to have dominion over men’s consciences and faith: and our Lord admonishes us not to give these titles in effect to any man; that is, not to regard them as infallible teachers or guides, and not to place any confidence in what they say, in matters of religion, except so far as it agrees with the word of God. “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Is. viii. 20.

READER.—*All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not.*—Be it sown by a weak hand, or a stronger, the immortal seed is still the same; yea, suppose the worst, that it be a foul hand that sows it, that the preacher himself be not so sanctified, or of so edifying a life, as you would wish, yet, the seed itself, being good, contracts no defilement, and may be effectual to regeneration in some, and to the strengthening of others; although he that is not renewed by it himself cannot have much hope of success, nor reap much comfort by it, and usually doth not seek or regard it much. But all instruments are alike in an almighty hand.—LEIGHTON.

The name of Christ is as ointment poured forth. After our Lord’s ascension, the Holy Ghost was shed upon the disciples, for this end, that they might pour forth his name to the ends of the earth. They did so, carrying this precious treasure in earthen vessels. And ever since, God hath continued the pouring forth of his name by the ministry and preaching of the gospel. It is true there are too many that are employed in this work that seek themselves and their own ends, rather than his glory whom they preach. And they that are more upright, the very best of them are sinful men. But, how mean and unworthy soever they be, despise not the Gospel. Let the sweet name which they pour forth, prevail for itself, that so you may reverence

ST. MATTHEW XXIII. 1—12.

and love it, if you would have salvation by it; and there is no other name under heaven by which that can be obtained.—LEIGHTON.

One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.—One is your Father which is in heaven.—Let this consideration teach us,

First, To surrender ourselves wholly to our heavenly Father and his good pleasure in all things, even in the sharpest afflictions and sufferings; and not to do our own will, or design our own profit and advantage, but in all things to do his will and intend his glory.—Secondly, To be spotless, and chaste, and holy in our whole conversation.—Thirdly, To be meek, and lowly, not to slander or reproach, mock or despise any; and if any do so to us, to bear it patiently, yea, to rejoice in it.—Fourthly, Unfeignedly to love our Christian brethren, and to be charitably and kindly affected towards all men, even to our enemies; forgiving them, yea, and praying for them, and returning them good for evil; to comfort the afflicted and relieve the poor, and to do good for all as we are able.

—LEIGHTON.

Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.—O holy and eternal Jesus, who wert pleased to lay aside the glories and incomprehensible majesty which clothed thy infinity from before the beginning of creatures, and didst put on a cloud upon thy brightness, and wert invested with the impure and imperfect broken robe of human nature, and

didst abate those splendours which broke through the veil, commanding devils not to publish thee, and men not to proclaim thy excellencies, and the Apostles not to reveal those glories of thine, which they discovered encircling thee upon Mount Tabor in thy transfiguration, and didst, by perpetual homilies, and symbolical mysterious actions, as with deep characters, engrave humility into the spirits of thy disciples and the discipline of Christianity;—teach us to approach near to these thy glories which thou hast so covered with a cloud, that we might, without amazement, behold thy excellencies; make us to imitate thy gracious condescension; take from us all vanity and fantastic complacency in our own persons or actions, and, when there arises a reputation consequent to the performance of any part of our duty, make us to reflect the glory upon thee, suffering nothing to adhere to our own spirits but shame at our own imperfection, and thankfulness to thee for all thy assistances; let us never seek the praise of men from unhandsome actions, from flatteries and unworthy discourses, nor entertain the praise with delight, though it proceed from better principles; but fear and tremble lest we deserve punishment or lose a reward which thou hast deposited for all them that seek thy glory and despise their own, that they may imitate the example of their Lord. Thou, O Lord, didst triumph over sin and death; subdue also my proud understanding and my prouder

affections, and bring me under thy yoke; that I may do thy work, and obey my superiors, and be a servant of all my brethren in their necessities, and esteem myself inferior to all men by a deep sense of my own unworthiness, and in all things may obey thy laws, and conform to thy precedents, and enter into thine inheritance, O holy and eternal Jesus! Amen.—TAYLOR.

HYMN.

Lord, for ever at thy side
May my place and portion be;
Strip me of the robe of pride,
Clothe me with humility.

Meekly may my soul receive
All thy Spirit hath reveal'd;
Thou hast spoken;—I believe,
Though the prophecy were seal'd.

Quiet as a weaned child,
Weaned from the mother's breast,
By no subtlety beguil'd
On thy faithfulness I rest.

Saints, rejoicing evermore,
In the Lord Jehovah trust;
Him in all his ways adore,
Wise, and wonderful, and just.

§ LXXIV.

CHAP. XXIII. 13—26.

Christ denounceth woes against the hypocrisy and blindness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

13 ¶ But 'woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men;

for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! "for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, "ye blind guides, which say, ' Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, 'or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is 'guilty.

19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or 'the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by 'him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by 'the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithe of mint and 'anise and cummin, and " have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! ' for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which* is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

1 Luke xi. 52.—m Mark xii. 40. Luke xx. 47. 2 Tim. iii. 6. Tit. i. 11.—n ch. xv. 14. ver. 24.—o ch. v. 33. 34.—p Ex. xxx. 29.—1 Or, *scholar*, or, *bound*—q Ex. xxix. 37.—r 1 Kings viii. 18. 2 Chron. vi. 2. Ps. xxvi. 8 : & cxviii. 14.—s ch. v. 34. Psalm xi. 4. Acts vii. 49.—1 Luke xi. 42.—Gr. *anethos*, *dill*.—u 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hos. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 8. ch. ix. 13 : & xii. 7.—s Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 39.

Reader.—The customs of the Scribes and Pharisees to which reference is here made are so far described by our Lord's own words as

2 q

to make further explanation needless.—To strain at a gnat,—or rather, to strain out a gnat, or small insect, as with a sieve, from wine, &c.,—and swallow a camel, is a proverbial form of speech, denoting a scrupulous observing of minute points of duty or legal ceremonies, and a neglect of the great and principal things, holy tempers, and a holy life.

READER.—*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*—They obeyed the commandments in the letter, not in the spirit: they minded what God spake, but not what he intended; they were busy in the outward work of the hand, but careless of the affections and choice of the heart. They rested in a carnal service.—They were curious to wash their hands, but cared not to purify their hearts; they would give alms, but hate him that received it; they would go to the temple, but did not revere the glory of God that dwelt there between the cherubim; they would fast, but not mortify their lusts; they would say good prayers, but not labour for the grace they prayed for. This was just as if a man should run on his master's errand, and do no business when he came there. They might easily have thought, that by the soul only a man approaches to God, and draws the body after it; but that no washing or corporal services could unite them and the Shechinah together, no such thing could make them like to God, who is the Prince

305

of Spirits.—God taught them by rites and ceremonies external, leading them by the hand to the purities of the heart, and by the services of the body to the obedience of the spirit; which because they would not understand, they thought they had done enough in the observation of the letter.

Again. They broke Moses' tables into pieces, and, gathering up the fragments, took to themselves what part of duty they pleased, and let the rest alone. For it was a proverb among the Jews, that "if a man chooses one positive commandment for his business, he may be less careful in any of the rest." Indeed, they said also, "He that multiplies the law, increases life;" that is, if he did attend to more good things, it was so much the better, but the other was well enough. But as for universal obedience, that was not the measure of their righteousness; for they taught that God would put our good works and bad into the balance, and, according to the heavier scale, give a portion in the world to come; so that some evil they would allow to themselves and their disciples, always provided it was less than the good they did. They would devour widows' houses, and make it up by long prayers; they would love their nation, and hate their prince; offer sacrifice, and curse Cæsar in their heart; advance Judaism, and destroy humanity.—TAYLOR.

These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.—The serving of God consisteth in the

performing of sincere and universal obedience to all his laws and commands: for if our whole man, both soul and body, and whatsoever we have or are, ought to be devoted to his glory, it must needs follow that whatsoever we do should be conformable to his precepts.—We must not think to pick and choose, to do some things and leave other things undone. We should take it ill if our servants should serve us so; if when we send them upon their several businesses, they should mind one of them and neglect all the other, we should questionless look upon them as very idle and careless servants. But let us consider and bethink ourselves, whether we have not served our master and eternal God as bad as our servants have served, or can serve, us. He hath given us several laws to observe, and hath set us several works to do, and we perhaps can make a shift to do something that is required of us, but never think of the other; and perhaps the principal things too that he expects from us.

Just as if, when Moses had broken the two tables of stone, whereon the Ten Commandments were written, one man should have come and snatched away one piece, a second run away with another piece, and a third with another, until at length ten several persons had gotten ten several pieces, whereon the Ten Commandments were severally written; and when they had done so, every one of them should have striven to keep the law that was written on his own piece,

ST. MATTHEW XXIII. 13—26.

never minding what was written in the others.—Do you think that such persons as these are could be reputed the servants of God, and to observe his laws, when they minded only one particular branch or piece of them? Let us remember, that the same finger that wrote one of the commands, wrote all the others too. And therefore he that doth not observe all as well as one, cannot properly be said to observe any at all. Neither indeed doth he serve God in any thing: for, though he may do something that God requires, yet it is plain that he doth not therefore do it because God requires it; for if he did so, he would do all things else too that God requires.—BEVERIDGE.

Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.—God “searcheth the heart, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” He is thoroughly acquainted with every thought in our hearts, and with every motion and inclination of our souls, infinitely better than ourselves are. And therefore it is vain for us to think to put him off with outward and formal, instead of inward and real, service: for he doth not only see what we do, but knows too what we think while we are doing of it; and doth not only observe the matter of our actions, but the manner also of performing them: it being his great prerogative to search the heart and to try the reins, and to have all things naked and open unto him (Heb. iv. 13),

so that he seeth what the soul doth within doors, as clearly as what it does without, in the open streets of the world; every affection of the soul being as manifest unto him as the actions of the body are. And therefore hypocrisy is the most foolish and ridiculous sin imaginable, making as if we would cheat and deceive God, and hide our sins from the all-seeing eyes of Omniscience itself, or make God believe that we are holy because we appear so to men.—But know this, ‘O vain man, whosoever thou art, that God will not be mocked;’ and though thou hast not seen, or perhaps so much as thought of, him, he hath seen thee and thy thoughts too; yea, at this very moment looks upon thee. And what wilt thou answer him, the great Judge of the whole world, when he shall tell thee to thy face, and call his Omniscience to witness, that he saw thee play the hypocrite with him, making as if thou servedst him, when thou servedst him not?—But, to prevent what justly may be our doom, let us repent of our former neglects in this kind; and for the future, let us still look upon God as looking upon us, and fix in our hearts this one thing, that God knows all things in the world. Let us not think to put God off with careless and perfunctory services; but if we desire to serve him at all, let us serve him “with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.”—BEVERIDGE.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”—Psalm li. 10.

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.—Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.”—Ps. cxix. 1, 2, 33, 34.

“Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.” Ps. cxix. 6.

PSALM XXXII.

Happy the man to whom his God
No more imputes his sin;
But, wash'd in the Redeemer's blood,
Hath made his garments clean!

Happy, beyond expression, he
Whose debts are thus discharg'd,
And, from the guilty bondage free,
Who feels his soul enlarg'd.

His spirit hates deceit and lies;
His words are all sincere;
He guards his heart, he guards his eyes,
To keep his conscience clear.

While I my inward guilt suppress'd,
No quiet could I find;
Thy wrath lay burning in my breast,
And rack'd my tortur'd mind.

Then I confess'd my troubled thoughts,
My secret sins reveal'd;
Thy pard'ning grace forgave my faults,
Thy grace my pardon seal'd.

This shall invite thy saints to pray;
When, like a raging flood,
Temptations rise, our strength and stay
Is a forgiving God.

WATTS.

§ LXXV.

CHAP. XXIII. 27—39.

Christ denounceth woes against the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees; and prophesieth of the destruction of Jerusalem.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! 'for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that 'ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 'Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 *Ye* serpents, *ye* 'generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 ¶ "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify: and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

35 "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, ^a from the blood of righteous Abel unto 'the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 ^a O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, ^b and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would "I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens "under *her* wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, ^c Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

^a Luke xi. 44. Acts xxiii. 2.—^b Luke xi. 47.—^c Acts vii. 51. 52. 1 Thess. ii. 15.—^d Gen. xv. 16. 1 Thess. ii. 16.—^e ch. iii. 7.; & xii. 34.—^f ch. xxi. 34, 35. Luke xi. 48.—^g Acts v. 40; & vii. 53, 59; & xxii. 19.—^h ch. x. 17. 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25.—ⁱ Rev. xviii. 24.—^j Gen. iv. 8. 1 John iii. 12.—^k 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.—^l Luke xiii. 34.—^m 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.—ⁿ Deut. xxiii. 11, 12. 2 Eed. i. 20.—^o Pa. xvii. 8; & xci. 4.—^p Pa. cxviii. 25. ch. xxi. 9.

Reader Some suppose that the

Zacharias to whom our Lord refers in ver. 35, is the one whose death is recorded in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22. He is there called the son of Jehoiada; but as double names are not unusual among the Jews, it is possible that Jehoiada may also have been called Barachias.—Others, however, suppose that our Lord alluded to an event of later date: and it has been conjectured that Zechariah is the prophet of that name whose writings have been preserved in the sacred volume, and who might have been put to death by the Jews; or that our Lord, speaking prophetically, alluded to the death of Zacharias, son of Baruch, a rich Jew, who was murdered in the temple shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem.

READER.—*Ye are like unto whited sepulchres. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.—* What avails it to wear this mask? A man may indeed in the sight of men act his part handsomely under it, and pass so for a time; but know we not there is an eye that sees through it, and a hand that, if we will not pull off this mask, will pull it off to our shame, either here in the sight of men, or, if we should escape all our life, and go fair off the stage under it, yet that there is a day appointed wherein all hypocrites shall be unveiled, and appear what they are indeed before men and angels? It is a poor thing to

be approved and applauded by man while God condemns, by whose sentence all men must stand or fall. Oh, seek to be approved and justified by him, and then, "Who shall condemn?" (Rom. viii. 34.) It is no matter who do. How easily may we bear the mistakes and dislikes of all the world, if he declares himself well pleased with us! "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged—of man's judgment.—He that judgeth me is the Lord," saith the Apostle.—LEIGHTON.

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?—If a man be once persuaded that he cannot possibly escape the judgments of God, but that, either in this world, or (which is much worse) in the next, they will certainly overtake him, if he sin presumptuously;—if this could be so pressed upon men's minds as to be received and believed, it must certainly in some measure put a stop to a great many crying sins which are but too rife among us.—I think it may be truly said that most people, when they commit any sin, do hope that they shall never hear of it again. At least there are few people engaged in sinful courses who are persuaded that no sin shall escape without its due reward.—And it is no new thing for people to hope to hide their sins, and by that means to escape the punishment that is due to them. "Hast thou seen," saith God to Ezekiel, (chap. viii. 12) "what these people do in the dark? For they say, the

Lord seeth us not." And Job (xxiv. 15) tells us that the adulterer, "waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me." But, alas! all this caution will not do. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." And both good and bad men have always found this true.—Let us consider that however we may escape here, yet, if we do not sincerely repent us of our sins, our sins will one day find us out, and overtake us, when God shall judge the world in righteousness, and give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing, whether they have been good or bad.—WILSON.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.—The Jews were too wise to be taught, even by the Son of God; they were too righteous to need repentance; they were too exact in lesser matters to mind the great concerns of the law; in one word, they took some care of their outward actions and profession, but had little or no concern for the inward graces of the Spirit. And is not this the case of too many Christians who depend upon being in covenant with God, and called by the name of Christians, and on that account only secure from destruction? And yet this was the very case of the Jews, whose unhappy condition and

ST. MATTHEW XXIII. 27—39.

blindness Jesus Christ laments with tears. They had Abraham for their father; they had the covenant, and the law, and the promises, and the temple, and the sacrifices;—and yet for want of humility, and making a right use of all these mighty advantages, they became the most abandoned of all people. And ought it not to humble us to consider how little we are better than they, with all the advantages we are apt to boast of? We that know we are made for the everlasting possession of the heavenly Canaan, and yet never prepare for it with seriousness! We that are made for the fellowship of angels, and yet can be content with the pleasures of beasts! We that have a time appointed us by God, in which to work out our salvation, wish an assurance that “when the night cometh no man can work,”—and yet defer this mighty concern to the evening of our day! We that believe an everlasting life of happiness or misery after death, and yet never seriously consider which of the two may be our portion! We that confess we are sinners, and yet live as if we had never offended God, and stand in no need of pardon! We that are in danger every moment to be snatched away, and are sure, if we die in our sins unrepented of, to be made the scorn of devils, and yet to be as unconcerned as if the command of life were in our own hands! Gracious God! that these considerations might awaken in us a deep sense of our unhappy state!—that, weighing the shortness and uncertainty of our

time,—the great work we have to do,—the comfort of living to “bring forth fruits meet for repentance,”—and the danger of dying under thy displeasure,—our hearts may be filled with godly fear, and that we may see, in this our day, the things which belong unto our peace, lest they be for ever hid from our eyes!
—WILSON.

There is in the world but a way of life, and a way of death; and the Lord, in the ministry of the word, gives us our option; “I have set before you this day life and death, blessing and cursing: and he that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not, shall be damned.” To the former he invites, beseeches, entices us with promises, with oaths, with engagements, with prevention of any just objection which might be made. “We pray you,” saith the Apostle, “in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” From the other he deters us by forewarning us of the wrath to come, and of the period which death will put to our lusts with our lives. And, as Tertullian once spake of the oath of God, so may I of his entreaties and threatenings; “O blessed men whom the Lord himself is pleased to solicit and entice unto happiness! But O miserable men, that will not believe nor accept of God’s own entreaties!”
—Oh that men would in time consider what a woful thing it is to fall into the hands, and to rouse up the jealousy, of the living God! that because he will do thus and thus unto obdurate sinners, they would therefore, in time, humble themselves

under his mighty hand, and prepare to meet him in the way of his judgments! For certainly, no sooner doth the heart of a sinner yield to God, but he meeteth him in his return, and preventeth him with goodness; his heart likewise is turned within him, and his repentings are kindled together. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;" he taketh no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but "he delighteth in mercy."—

REYNOLDS.

HYMN.

See how the Lord of mercy spreads
His gentle hands abroad;
And warns us of the circling foes
That thirst to drink our blood.

"Fly to the shelter of mine arms,
And dwell secure from fear;
Nor earth nor hell shall pluck you thence,
Or reach and wound you there."

With anxious heart the parent bird
Thus calls her offspring round,
When horrid vultures beat the air
And slaughter stains the ground.

The trembling brood, by nature taught,
Fly to the known retreat,
Beneath the downy wings are safe,
And find the shelter sweet.

But men, alas, more thoughtless men,
Refuse to lend an ear,
Their only refuge madly fly
And rather die than hear.

They spurn the Saviour's offered grace
Till they his wrath inflame;
Then desolation lays them low
In agony and shame.

DODDRIDGE.

§ LXXXVI.

CHAP. XXIV. 1—28.

Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple: what and how great calamities shall be before it.

AND * Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, ' There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives ' the disciples came unto him privately, saying, "Tell us when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, ' Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For ' many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; ' and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For ' nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom

against kingdom : and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

9 'Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many ^a be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And ^r many false prophets shall rise, and ^m shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 ⁿ But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this ^o gospel of the kingdom ^r shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come.

15 ^r When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by ^r Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (' whoso readeth let him understand :)

16 Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains :

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house :

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And ' woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days !

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.

21 For ⁿ then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved : ⁿ but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 ^r Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there ; believe *it* not.

24 For ^r there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, ⁿ if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth : behold, *he is* in the secret chambers ; believe *it* not.

ST. MATTHEW XXIV. 1—28.

27 ^b For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 ^c For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

^a Mark xiii. 1. Luke xvi. 5.—^b 1 Kings ix. 7. Jer. xxvi. 18. Mic. iii. 12. Luke xix. 44.—^c Mark xiii. 3.—^d 1 Thessa. v. 1.—^e Eph. v. 6. Col. ii. 8, 18. 2 Thessa. ii. 8. 1 John iv. 1.—^f Jer. xiv. 14.; & xxiii. 21, 25. ver. 24. John v. 43.—^g ver. 11.—^h 2 Chron. xv. 6. Is. xix. 2. Hag. ii. 22. Zech. xiv. 18.—ⁱ ch. x. 17. Mark xiii. 9. Luke xxi. 12. John xv. 20; & xvi. 2. Acts iv. 2. 3; & vii. 59; & xii. 1. &c. 1 Pet. iv. 16. Rev. ii. 10. 13.—^k ch. xi. 6; & xiii. 57. 2 Tim. i. 15; & iv. 10. 16.—^l ch. vii. 15. Acts xx. 29. 2 Pet. ii. 1.—^m 1 Tim. iv. 1. ver. 8, 24.—ⁿ ch. x. 23. Mark xiii. 13. Heb. iii. 6, 14. Rev. ii. 10.—^o ch. iv. 23; & ix. 36.—^p Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 6, 23.—^q Mark xiii. 14. Luke xxi. 20.—^r Dan. ix. 27; & xii. 11.—^s Dan. ix. 23, 25.—^t Luke xxiii. 29.—^u Dan. ix. 26; & xii. 1. Joel ii. 2.—^v Is. lxxv. 8, 9. Zech. xiv. 2. 3.—^w Mark xiii. 21. Luke xvii. 23; & xxi. 8.—^x Deut. xiii. 1. ver. 5, 11. 2 Thessa. ii. 9, 10, 11. Rev. xiii. 13.—^y John vi. 57; & x. 28, 29. Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30. 2 Tim. ii. 19.—^z Luke xvii. 24.—^a Job. xxxix. 30. Luke xvii. 37.

Reader. Some Divines regard this chapter simply as a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and events in immediate connection with that catastrophe.—Others consider it as a prediction of that event, not simply in itself, but also, and chiefly, as typical of the end of the world, and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judgment. "The destruction of a great city," says Bishop Newton, "is a lively type and image of the end of the world; and we may observe that our Saviour no sooner begins to speak of the destruction of Jerusalem than his figures are raised, his language is swelled, and he expresses himself in such terms as in a lower sense indeed are applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem, but describe something higher in their proper and genuine signification."—Others again suppose that the former part

of this chapter relates strictly and exclusively to the destruction of Jerusalem; and that the latter part (beginning with ver. 29) applies entirely to the end of the world and the last judgment. It will not be agreeable to our present purpose to enter into any detail of the arguments by which these several views are supported;—neither will it be needful to discuss difficult questions connected with some particular texts in the course of this chapter. I shall rather call your attention to those great ideas and truths which are undoubtedly contained in this portion of holy Scripture, whatever may be the precise order in which they lie: and with this view I have selected some passages from our Divines relating to,—First, the destruction of Jerusalem as a remarkable fulfilment of this divine prophecy, and as a punishment inflicted on the unbelieving and impenitent Jews:—Secondly, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judgment, in a visible form, with power and great glory;—and Thirdly, the duty and necessity of continual watchfulness, and habitual preparation for this solemn and great event. Our present meditation will relate to the first of these three points. I propose to consider the two others afterwards.

READER.—It appears next to impossible that any man should duly consider these prophecies, and the exact completion of them, and,

ST. MATTHEW XXIV. 1—28.

if he is a believer, not be confirmed in the faith, or, if he is an infidel, not be converted. Can any stronger proof be given of a divine revelation than the spirit of prophecy? and can any stronger proof be given of the spirit of prophecy than the examples now before us, in which so many contingencies, and, I may say, improbabilities, which human wisdom or prudence could never foresee, are so particularly foretold, and so punctually accomplished?—Could human prudence foresee famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places? Could human prudence foresee the speedy propagation of the Gospel so contrary to all human probability? Could human prudence foresee such an utter destruction of Jerusalem, with all the circumstances preceding and following it? It was never the custom of the Romans absolutely to ruin any of their provinces: it was improbable therefore that such a thing should happen at all, and still more improbable that it should happen under the humane and generous Titus.

For the completion of these prophecies, the persons seem to have been wonderfully raised up and preserved by Divine Providence. *Vespasian* was promoted from obscurity, and, though feared and hated by Nero, yet was preferred by him, and singled out as the only general among the Romans who was equal to such a war; God, perhaps, (as *Josephus* intimates) so disposing and ordering affairs. He had subdued the greatest part of Judæa

when he was advanced to the empire; and he was happy in putting an end to the civil wars, and to the other troubles and calamities of the state, or otherwise he would hardly have been at leisure to prosecute the war with the Jews. *Titus* was wonderfully preserved in the most critical articles of danger. While he was taking a view of the city he was surrounded by the enemy, and nothing less was expected than that he should be slain, or made prisoner; but he resolutely broke through the midst of them, and, though unarmed, yet arrived unhurt at his own camp: upon which *Josephus* makes this reflection, that the turns of war and the dangers of princes are under the peculiar care of God.—*Josephus* himself was also no less wonderfully preserved than *Titus*; the one to destroy the city, and the other to record its destruction. As *Vespasian* and *Titus* seem to have been raised up and preserved for the completion of these prophecies, so might *Josephus* for the illustration of their completion. For, the particular passages and transactions by which we prove the completion of these prophecies we derive not so much from Christian writers, who might be suspected of a design to parallel the events with the predictions, as from heathen authors, and chiefly from *Josephus* the Jewish historian, who, though very exact and minute in other relations, yet avoids as much as he can the mention of Christ and the Christian religion.—It is indeed very providential, that a more par-

ST. MATTHEW XXIV. 1—28.

ticular detail, a more exact history, is preserved of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of all the circumstances relating to it, than of any other matter whatever transacted so long ago; and it is an additional advantage to our cause, that these accounts are transmitted to us by a Jew, and by a Jew who was himself an eye-witness to most of the things which he relates.—He designed nothing less, and yet, as if he had designed nothing more, his history of the Jewish wars may serve as a large comment on our Saviour's prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem. If any one would compare our Saviour's words with that writer's history of the whole war (as Eusebius very well observes), he could not but admire and acknowledge our Saviour's prescience and prediction to be wonderful above nature, and truly Divine.

The predictions are the clearest, as the calamities were the greatest, which the world ever saw. And what heinous sin was it which could bring down such heavy judgments on the Jewish Church and nation? Can any other, with half so much probability, be assigned, as that which the Scripture assigns, their crucifying of the Lord of glory? As St. Paul expresses it, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16, "they both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and persecuted the Apostles," and so "filled up their sins, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost." This is always objected as the most capital sin of the nation. And upon reflection, we shall find some correspondence between their crime and

their punishment. They put Jesus to death, when their nation was assembled to celebrate the passover; and when the nation was assembled, too, to celebrate the passover, Titus shut them up within the walls of Jerusalem. The rejection of the true Messiah was their crime; and their following of false Messiahs, to their destruction, was their punishment. They sold and bought Jesus as a slave; and they themselves were afterwards bought and sold as slaves, at the lowest prices. They preferred a robber and murderer to Jesus, whom they crucified between two thieves; and they themselves were infested with bands of thieves and robbers. They put Jesus to death lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation; and the Romans did come and take away their place and nation. They crucified Jesus before the walls of Jerusalem; and before the walls of Jerusalem they themselves were crucified in such numbers, that it is said room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies. I should think it hardly possible for any man to lay these things together, and not conclude the Jews' own imprecation to be remarkably fulfilled upon them, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matt. xxvii. 25.

We, Christians, cannot indeed be guilty of the very same offence, in crucifying the Lord of glory: but it behoves us to consider whether we may not be guilty in the same kind, and, by our sins and iniquities, "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," Heb.

ST. MATTHEW XXIV. 1—28.

vi. 6 ; and, therefore, whether, being like them in their crime, we may not also resemble them in their punishment. They rejected the Messiah, and we indeed have received him : but have our lives been at all agreeable to our holy profession, or rather, as we have had opportunities of knowing Christ more, have we not obeyed him less, than other Christians, and “ trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith we are sanctified, an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace ? ” Heb. x. 29. The flagrant crimes of the Jews, and the principal sources of their calamities, in the opinion of Josephus, were their trampling upon all human laws, deriding divine things, and making a jest of the oracles of the prophets, as so many dreams and fables : and how hath the same spirit of licentiousness and infidelity prevailed likewise among us ! How have the laws and lawful authority been insulted with equal insolence, and impunity ! How have the holy Scriptures, those treasures of divine wisdom, not only been neglected, but despised, derided, and abused to the worst purposes ! How have the principal articles of our faith been denied, the prophecies and miracles of Moses, and the works of Christ and his Apostles, been ridiculed, and impiety and blasphemy not only been whispered in the ear, but proclaimed from the press ! How hath all public worship and religion, and the administration of the Sacraments, been slighted and

condemned, and the Sabbath profaned, chiefly by those who ought to set a better example, “ to whom much is given, and of whom much, therefore, will be required ! ” And if, for their sins and provocations, “ God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith ; be not high-minded, but fear. ” Romans xi. 21, 22. God bore long with the Jews ; and hath he not borne long with us too ? But he cut them off when the measure of their iniquities was full ; and let us beware lest our measure be not also well nigh full, and we be not growing ripe for excision. What was said to the Church of Ephesus is very applicable to us and our own case ; “ Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. ” Rev. ii. 5.—
BISHOP NEWTON.

HYMN.

Great God of Abraham, hear our prayer ;
Let Abraham's seed thy mercy share ;
Oh, may they now at length return,
And look on him they pierc'd, and mourn !

Their misery let thy mercy heal ;
Their trespass hide, their mercy seal ;
O God of Israel ! hear their prayer,
And grant them still thy love to share.

How long shall Jacob's offspring prove
The vast suspension of thy love ?
Say, shall thy wrath perpetual burn,
And wilt thou ne'er appeas'd return ?

Thy quick'ning Spirit now impart,
And wake to joy each grateful heart ;
While Israel's rescued tribes in thee
Their bliss and full salvation see!

§ LXXVII.

CHAP. XXIV. 29—35.

Christ foretelleth the signs of his coming to judgment.

29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken :

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree ; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh :

33 So likewise ye, when ye

shall see all these things know that it is near, even at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.

d Dan. vii. 11, 12.—e Is. xlii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 10, 31; & iii. 16. Amos v. 20; & viii. 9. Mark xlii. 24. Luke xxi. 26. Acts ii. 20. Rev. vi. 12.—f Dan. vii. 13.—g Zech. xii. 12.—h ch. xvi. 27. Mark xiii. 26. Rev. i. 7.—i ch. xiii. 41. 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Thess. iv. 16.—j Or, with a trumpet, and a great voice.—k Luke xxi. 29.—l Jan. v. 9.—m Or, he.—n ch. xvi. 26; & xlii. 26. Mark xiii. 30. Luke xxi. 32.—o Ps. cii. 26. Is. li. 6. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. ch. v. 16. Mark xiii. 31. Luke xxi. 33. Heb. i. 11.

Reader. These verses are usually regarded as a direct prophecy of our Lord's second coming to judge the world, of which great event the destruction of Jerusalem before alluded to may be regarded as a type. Bishop Horsley explains the notes of time thus ;—*Immediately after the tribulation of those days*, i. e. after the whole period of the tribulation of the Jewish nation,—the whole period during which Jerusalem is to be trodden down. *The things to be speedily fulfilled* (ver. 34), and which some of the Apostles and their contemporaries were to see, were the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin and distress of the Jewish nation,—the commencement of that great and long tribulation which is to be followed by the return of the Son of man.

"The tribulation began," says he, "in the days of the Jewish war; but the period of it is at this day in its course, and will not end till the time shall come, predetermined in

the counsels of God, for the restoration of that people to their ancient seats. This whole period will probably be a period of affliction, not to the Jews only, but also in some degree to the Christian church: for not before the expiration of it will the true church be secure from persecution from without, from corruption, schism, and heresy within. But when this period shall be run out,—when the destined time shall come for the conversion and restoration of the Jewish people,—immediately shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, i. e. great commotions and revolutions will take place among the kingdoms of the earth.—Under the image of these celestial disorders, the overthrow of some wicked nations in the last ages is predicted; probably of some who shall pretend to oppose, by force of arms, the return of the chosen race to the holy land, and the reestablishment of their kingdom.”

It is the general opinion of our Divines that the restoration of the Jews will consist in their conversion to the Christian faith, and their re-admission into the Divine favour, and that their return to their native land, in addition to those spiritual blessings, is also to be expected.

READER.—*Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.*—The belief of our Lord's coming, so explicitly foretold, is an article of no

little moment in a Christian's creed. —It is true that the expectation of a future retribution is what ought, in the nature of the thing, to be a sufficient restraint upon a wise man's conduct, though we were uninformed of the manner in which it will be brought about, and were at liberty to suppose that every individual's lot would be silently determined, without any public entry of the Almighty Judge, and without the formality of a public trial. But, our merciful God hath been pleased to ordain that the business shall be so conducted, and the method of it so clearly foretold, as to strike the profane with awe, and to animate the humble and the timid. He hath warned us,—and let them who dare to extenuate the warning ponder the dreadful curse with which the book of prophecy is sealed, “If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,”—God hath warned us that the inquiry into every man's conduct will be public, —Christ himself the judge, the whole race of man, and the whole angelic host, spectators of the awful scene. —As no elevation of rank will then give a title to respect, no obscurity of condition shall exclude the just from public honour, or screen the guilty from public shame.—The sentence of every man will be pronounced by him who cannot be merciful to those who shall have willingly sold themselves to that abject bondage from which he came to purchase their redemption,— who, nevertheless hav-

ST. MATTHEW XXIV. 29—35.

ing felt the power of temptation, knows how to pity them that have been tempted; by him on whose mercy contrite frailty may rely, whose anger hardened impenitence must dread. To heighten the solemnity and terror of the business, the Judge will visibly descend from Heaven,—the shout of the archangel and the trump of God will thunder through the deep,—the dead will awake,—the glorified saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air,—while the wicked will in vain call upon the mountains and the rocks to cover them. Of the day and hour when these things shall be, knoweth no man; but the day and hour for these things are fixed in the eternal Father's counsels. Our Lord will come; he will come unlooked for, and may come sooner than we think.

God grant that the thought and expectation of that glorious advent may be so fixed in our hearts, that by constant watchfulness on our part, and by the powerful succour of God's holy Spirit, we may be found of our Lord, when he cometh, without spot and blameless!—
HORSLEY.

And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.—This will be the glory of that day, to see the visible appearance of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, attended with myriads of angels to his throne of glory, where he sits encircled with the heavenly host, and all mankind standing before his tribunal, expecting their final

doom from his mouth.—Who can possibly conceive the joy and exultation of that day, when good men shall see their Lord coming in the clouds of heaven, clothed with a human body, but bright and glorious as the sun; a body which still retains the marks of his sufferings and the tokens of his love! How will it transport us to see him whom our soul loveth! to see him whom we have so ardently longed and desired to see! To see him, I say, not as the shepherds did, a poor helpless infant, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger; to see him not arraigned as a malefactor, nor hanging in a shameful manner upon the cross, but to see him in all his majesty and glory, to see him a triumphant conqueror and judge, to see him with crowns and laurels in his hands, and in him to see the certainty of our faith, the completion of our hopes, the rewards of our patience and sufferings, and our final conquest over death and hell. O joyful day, when this royal bridegroom shall come in the glory of his Father to meet his spouse the church, to conduct her to his Father's house, there to see and to partake in his glory, never to part more! Methinks I see holy and devout souls, in the highest raptures and ecstasies of joy, embracing and comforting one another at the appearance of their Lord. Here comes the blessed Jesus, it is he himself, the true image of God, the very brightness of his Father's glory! This is that very day we have so

long expected and hoped for. Let us go forth, and meet him. He is come to judgment; but let those tremble at judgment who are afraid of the judge. We are his: he has bought us with his blood; he has renewed and sanctified us by his Spirit; and now he is come to own us in the presence of men and angels, to bestow a kingdom on us, to receive us to himself, that where he is we may be also, and behold his glory.

But then, on the other hand, consider, I beseech you, what a terrible sight it will be to bad men who have laughed at the history of a crucified Jesus, and mocked at a future judgment. And is he come, will such a sinner say, and must I be judged at last, when I thought myself so secure of judgment? What terror is there in his looks! How do his eyes flame with vengeance! Who can abide the day of his wrath! How can I appear before him as my judge whom I would not have for my Saviour? What account can I give of my actions, who never expected to be called to an account for them? What plea can I make for myself, who would never believe, never be persuaded? How can I bear his presence, and yet whither can I flee from him? When he condemns me, to whom can I appeal from the Judge and Saviour of the world?

Let these thoughts then make a deep impression upon our minds, before that day comes. Let us remember that the Son of man will be our judge, he who laid down

his life for us, he who now invites us to repentance, he who now promises pardon and forgiveness to true penitents. Let this teach us to reverence his laws, to imitate his example, to put our whole trust in his merits and intercession, that when he cometh again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal, as our church teaches us to pray.—SHERLOCK.

HYMN.

Great God, what do I see and hear?
The end of things created!
Behold the Judge of man appear
On clouds of glory seated!
The trumpet sounds, the graves restore
The dead which they contain'd before:
Prepare, my soul, to meet him!

The dead in Christ shall first arise
At the last trumpet's sounding,
Caught up to meet him in the skies,
With joy their Lord surrounding.
No gloomy fears their souls dismay;
His presence sheds eternal day
On those prepar'd to meet him.

But sinners, filled with guilty fears,
Behold his wrath prevailing;
For they shall rise, and find that tears
And sighs are unavailing.
The day of grace is past and gone;
Trembling they stand before the throne
All unprepar'd to meet him.

Great God, what do I see and hear?
The end of things created!
Behold the Judge of man appear
On clouds of glory seated!
Low at his cross, I view the day
When heav'n and earth shall pass away,
And thus prepare to meet him.

LUTHER (translated).

§ LXXVIII.

CHAP. XXIV. 36—51.

Because the day and hour of the judgment is unknown, we ought to watch like good servants expecting every moment our master's coming.

36 ¶ 'But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, ' but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 'For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 'Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two *women shall be grinding* at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 ¶ 'Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 'But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have

watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 'Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 'Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 'Blessed *is* that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That ' he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

51 And shall ' cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: ' there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

o Mark xiii. 32. Acts i. 7. 1 The. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. —p Zech. xiv. 7.—q Gen. vi. 3, 4, 5; & vii. 1. Luke xvii. 26. 1 Pet. iii. 20.—r Luke xvii. 34, &c.—s ch. xxv. 13. Mark xiii. 33, &c. Luke xxi. 36.—t Luke xii. 39. 1 The. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3; & xvi. 15.—u ch. xxv. 13. 1 The. v. 6.—v Luke xii. 42. Acts xx. 28. 1 Cor. iv. 2. Heb. iii. 5.—w Rev. xvi. 15.—x ch. xxv. 21, 23. Luke xxii. 29.—y Or, cut him off.—z ch. viii. 12; & xxv. 30.

ST. MATTHEW XXIV. 36—51.

READER. *As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.—They knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.—The one shall be taken and the other left.—*Those who are under the power of sin are in a state of death; and if they die before they have a principle of new life in them, they fall under the power of death, that is, into that state of misery and punishment which is appointed for such dead souls.—If death arrests us while we are in a state of sin, we must die for ever; but if our souls are alive to God, by a principle of grace and holiness, before our bodies die, they must live for ever. A dead soul must die with its body, that is, sink into a state of misery, which is the death and the loss of the soul. A living soul survives the body in a state of bliss and happiness, and shall receive its body again, glorious and immortal, at the resurrection of the just. But this change of state must be made while we live in these bodies; a dead soul cannot revive in the other world, nor a living soul die there: and therefore this life is the day of God's grace and patience, the next world is the place of judgment.—SHERLOCK.

*Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your lord doth come.—*Since the time of our death is so unknown and uncertain to us, we ought always to live in expectation of it; to be so far from promising ourselves long life, that we should not promise ourselves a day, and the reason for this is plain and

necessary, because we are not sure of a day.—To live always in expectation of dying does not signify a belief that we *shall* die to day, but only that we *may*. And such an expectation as this has nothing of dread and terror in it, but only prudence and caution. Men may live very comfortably and enjoy all the innocent pleasures of life, with these thoughts about them. To expect death every day is like expecting thieves every night, which does not disturb our rest, but only makes us lock and bar our doors and provide for our defence. Thus to expect death is not to live under the perpetual fear of dying, but to live as a wise man would do, who knows not that he must, but that he may, die to day. That is, to be always prepared for death, not to defer our repentance and return to God one moment; not to commit any wilful sin, lest death should surprise us in it; not to be slothful and negligent, but to be always employed in our master's business, according to our Saviour's counsel, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh shall find so doing."—SHERLOCK.

Every good man can watch always. And, that we may not be deceived in this, let us know, that the running away from a temptation is a part of our watchfulness, and every good employment is another great part of it, and a laying in provisions of reason and religion beforehand is yet a third part of this watchfulness. And the conversation of a Christian is a per-

petual watchfulness: not a continual thinking of that one or those many things which may endanger us; but it is a continual doing something, directly or indirectly, against sin. He either prays to God for his Spirit, or relies on the promises, or places himself at the feet of good men to hear their wise sayings, or calls for the church's prayers, or does the duty of his calling, or actually resists temptation, or frequently renews his holy purposes, or fortifies himself by vows, or searches into his danger by a daily examination; so that, on the whole, he is ever on his guard. This duty and caution of a Christian is like watching lest a man cut his finger. Wise men do not often cut their fingers, yet every day they use a knife. And a man's eye is a very tender thing, and every thing can do it wrong, and every thing can put it out, yet because we love our eyes so well, in the midst of so many dangers, by God's providence and a prudent natural care, by winking when any thing comes against them, and by turning aside when a blow is offered, they are preserved so certainly, that not one man in ten thousand does, by a stroke, lose one of his eyes in all his life time. If we would transplant our natural care into a spiritual caution, we might, by God's grace, be kept from losing our souls, as we are from losing our eyes; and because a perpetual watchfulness is our great defence, and the perpetual presence of God's grace is our great security, and that this grace never

leaves us unless we leave it, the precept of a daily watchfulness is a thing not only reasonable, but easy in many ways to be performed.—TAYLOR.

Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.—It must be the business of our whole lives to prepare for death. Our accounts must be always ready, because we know not how soon we may be called to give account of our stewardship: we must be always on our watch, as not knowing at what hour our Lord will come.—Some men talk of preparing for death, as if it were a thing that could be done in two or three days, and that the proper time of doing it were a little before they die. But I know no other preparation for death but living well; and thus we must every day prepare for death, and then we shall be well prepared when death comes; that is, we shall be able to give a good account of our lives, and of the improvement of our talents. He who can do this is well prepared to die, and to go to judgment.

Think what a sad thing it will be when your soul must remove out of that little cottage in which it now dwells, not to be bettered by the removal, but thrust out into outer darkness. Whereas, if ye would give up sin, and embrace Jesus Christ as your joy and your life, in him you would presently be put into a sure, unfailing, right to eternal life.—LEIGHTON.

O Sun of Righteousness, that comest to bring light unto the world

by thy word and example, and illumination of thy Holy Spirit; let thy Spirit lead us, thy example guide us, thy word teach us, that we may not love darkness more than light, but may keep thy righteous judgments, according to our many purposes and our vow of baptism. Keep us from the snare of the ungodly; and from ourselves, the dangers of our own concupiscence, and the miseries of our infirmity. Leave not our souls in our own hands, but keep them under thy protection and government, lest we swerve from thy commandments; but that, applying our hearts always to fulfil thy statutes even unto the end, we may possess thy law as our portion and our inheritance for ever. Grant this, O blessed Jesus, for thy promise and thy mercies' sake, that we may glorify thee in the unity of the most mysterious Trinity, now and for evermore. Amen.—
TAYLOR.

The lord of that (evil) servant, shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.—Grace is the new nature of a Christian, and hypocrisy the art that counterfeits it. The more exquisite it is in imitation, the more plausible it is to men, but the more abominable to God. It may frame a spiritual man in image so to the life, that not only others, but even the hypocrite himself, may admire it, and, favouring his own artifice, may be deceived so far as to say and to think it lives, and to fall in love with it: but he is no less abhorred by the Searcher of hearts than plea-

sing to himself. Surely this mischief of hypocrisy can never be enough inveighed against. When religion is in request, it is the chief malady of the church, and numbers die of it; though because it is a subtle and inward evil, it be little perceived. It is to be feared that there are many sick of it who look well and comely in God's outward worship. They may pass well in good weather, in times of peace, but days of adversity are days of trial. The prosperous estate of the church makes hypocrites, and her distress discovers them. But, if they escape such trial there is one inevitable day coming, wherein all secret things shall be made manifest. Men shall be turned inside out; and among all sinners that shall then be brought before that judgment-seat, the most deformed sight shall be an unmasked hypocrite, and the heaviest sentence shall be his portion.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Alas, what hourly dangers rise,
What snares beset my way!
To heaven oh! let me lift mine eyes,
And hourly watch and pray.

O gracious God, in whom I live,
My feeble efforts aid;
Help me to watch, and strive, and pray,
Though trembling and afraid.

Increase my faith, increase my hope,
When foes and fears prevail;
And bear my fainting spirit up,
Or soon my faith will fail.

Whene'er temptations fright mine heart,
Or lure my feet aside,
My God, thy powerful aid impart,
My guardian and my guide!

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 1—13.

Oh ! keep me in thy heavenly way,
And bid the tempter flee ;
And let me never never stray
From happiness and Thee !

STEELE.

§ LXXIX.

CHAP. XXV. 1—13.

The parable of the ten Virgins.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet ^a the bridegroom.

2 ^b And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them :

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, ^c they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight ^d there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and ^e trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil ; for our lamps are ^f gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so* ; lest there be not enough for us and you : but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

326

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage : and ^g the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, ^h Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered, and said, Verily I say unto you, ⁱ I know you not.

13 ^j Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

^a Eph. v. 29, 30. Rev. xix. 7 ; & xxi. 2, 9.—^b ch. xiii. 47 ; & xxii. 10.—^c 1 Thess. 5, 6.—^d ch. xxiv. 31. 1 Thess. iv. 16.—^e Luke xii. 35.—^f Or going out.—^g Luke xiii. 25.—^h ch. vii. 21, 22, 23.—ⁱ Ps. v. 5. Hab. i. 13. John ix. 31. ^j ch. xxiv. 42, 44. Mark xiii. 33, 35. Luke xxi. 36. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. 1 Thess. v. 6. 1 Pet. v. 8. Rev. xvi. 15.

Reader. In the structure of this parable we find an allusion to certain marriage ceremonies, common and well known in Eastern countries. It was usual for the bridegroom to conduct the bride to his own house, with great pomp and state, in the evening or at night. A party of friends attended the bridegroom and bride on their journey ; and another party was in readiness to receive them on their arrival. Torches or flambeaux were used on these occasions, partly for necessity, and partly for ornament and splendour.

The interpretation of the parable is, for the most part, obvious. The ten virgins denote professors of religion. The wise are they who are faithful, watchful, and diligent ; the foolish are the careless and worldly

minded, who are not prepared to meet their God. The lamps or torches denote the profession of religion; oil in the vessels, corresponding grace and duty. While the bridegroom tarried, i. e. before the day of judgment, they all slumbered and slept, i. e. all these professors died. The sudden midnight cry is the summons to meet the Lord in judgment. Then the faithful and vigilant are admitted into the joy of the Lord; but the negligent and unholy are shut out from his presence, without any means of obtaining admission, or of restoring themselves to his favour. And hence it appears that it is at once our duty and our privilege to be always ready.

READER.—*Five of these were wise and five were foolish.*—To be a Christian, and a true Christian, are two very different things.—A true Christian sets his pattern before his eyes; and because his salvation depends on it, he resolves to make it the rule of his life. He studies, therefore, the truths and the duties of the Gospel; prefers the light he meets with there to all other. He resolves that what the gospel declares he will believe, let what will be said against it; that what it recommends, he will follow that, and avoid what it forbids. If, upon examining his conscience, he finds that he does anything contrary to what the Gospel prescribes, he is ashamed and sorry for it; begs

God's pardon, and his grace to observe it better for the time to come; watches over his inclinations; avoiding every temptation that may lead him into sin; never consulting the world, its authority, its customs, or its favours, for what he ought to do or what to avoid. And, by doing this, he secures the favour of God, his grace here, and eternal happiness hereafter.—On the other hand, those Christians who live, as too many do, in a general forgetfulness of God; taking no care of their souls; contenting themselves with some outward formalities, and bare shadows of religion, without feeling its power; who make the world their pattern, notwithstanding the caution Jesus Christ has given us, not to follow its ways and maxims; such people, under the name of Christians, are very heathens, will be rejected of God, and are reserved for a punishment dreadful to be named.

Christians must not, to excuse themselves, say that they cannot be what the Gospel requires them to be. It is no less than blasphemy to say so. For God's grace is sufficient; his grace may be had for asking; and he requires no more of us than what (upon our sincere prayers and endeavours) he will enable us to perform.—WILSON.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.—This we ought to be constantly intent upon, as the business of our lives, our daily work, to get our spirits so attempered and

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 1—13.

fitted to heaven, that if we be asked, What design we drive? What are we doing? we may be able to make this true answer, We are preparing ourselves for eternity!—Let us consider; are we conscious of no unfitness for that blessed state, to dwell in the presence of the holy God? to be associated with the heavenly assembly of pure intellectual spirits? to consort and join with them in their celebrations and triumphant songs? Can we espy no such thing in ourselves as an earthly mind, aversion to God, as pride, disdain, wrath, or envy, admiration of ourselves, aptness to seek our own things with the neglect of others, or the like? And do not our hearts then misgive, and tell us we are unready, not yet prepared to approach the divine presence, or to enter into the habitation of his holiness and glory? And what then have we to do, but to set ourselves to our preparatory work; to set our watches, make our observations, take strict notice of all the defections and obliquities of our spirits, settle our methods, hasten a redress? Do we not know this is the time and state of preparation? And since we know it, how would the folly torture us, by reflection, of having betrayed ourselves into a surprisal! None are ever wont to enter upon any new state without some foregoing preparation. Every more remarkable turn or change in our lives is commonly (if at all foreknown) introduced with many a serious forethought. If a man be to change his dwelling, employ-

ment, condition, common discretion will put him upon thinking how to consort with the place, business, converse, and way of living he is next to betake himself to. And his thoughts will be the more intense, by how much more momentous the change. But what so great change as this can the nature of man admit, that a soul, long shut up in flesh, is to go forth from its earthly mansion and to return no more; expecting to be received into the glorious presence of the eternal King, and go act its part among the perfected spirits that attend his throne? How solicitous endeavour of a very thorough preparation doth this case call for!—Howz.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.—Let us live, expecting a period to be ere long put to our life on earth. For remember, there are keys put into a great hand for this very purpose, that holds them not in vain. It is appointed for all men once to die;—when that once shall be, it belongs to him to determine. And from the course we may observe him to hold, as it is uncertain to all, it can be very remote to none.—How wise and prudent a thing to accommodate ourselves prudently to his pleasure, in whose power we are; and to live as men continually expecting to die!—Howz.

At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, &c.—How long soever the end of the world and the day of judgment may be delayed, yet we

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 1—31.

have great reason immediately to prepare for it. This life is the only time we have to prepare for it. Death puts an end to our account for eternity; for we shall be judged according to what we have done in the body, whether it be good or bad; and the final sentence will pass on us according to that state which death finds us in.—Whatever the intermediate state be, how long soever it be between Death and Judgment, yet our account is the same; and to be surprised by Death before we are provided for it, is the same thing as to be surprised by Judgment.—SHERLOCK.

They that were ready went in with him to the marriage.—The heavenly bridegroom intends to entertain all pious men with an everlasting supper; to make them a never ceasing jubilee; and treat them with such sumptuous magnificence that there will not be tongues enough among them all to publish his praises, and their own thankfulness. Only you must remember that the entertainment he will give them is himself, and they will feast eternally upon his blessed presence. Their happiness will be to see God, to behold the glory which is given to our Lord; that is, to know him, and to be filled with his wisdom, love, and likeness. Their life and felicity consists in a clear and distinct perception of him; in a close union and conjunction of heart and will with him; in a feeling of the pleasures that are in him. Thither if we can but get, we shall love as much as we are able, and be able to love far more than we can

now think. The greatness of the object will enlarge the affection. The vastness of the good will force the will to desire and love more than else it would. We shall enjoy according to the wideness of our capacity; and all our capacities will be so enlarged, that they will exceed the extent of our present thoughts, as much as our present thoughts exceed our present enjoyments. It is a life wherein we shall do nothing but what we desire; and wherein all things shall be just as we will ourselves; and wherein we shall will nothing but that which is most to be chosen;—a life, every act of which must needs be sweet, and full of joy, beyond all the measures of all our present wishes. When we think, we shall rejoice; when we love, we shall rejoice; when we adore or praise, we shall rejoice. Whatsoever we do, it will have infinite delight and pleasure in it; and when we have done it ever so often, it will be eternally to be done again; and we shall likewise have more power to do it; and every repetition of such act will be a fresh addition of contentment in the doing of them. There is no satiety nor loathing in the enjoyment of that good; no fainting nor growing weary; but we shall always think we have enough, and yet still be enjoying more; we shall be in a perpetual youth and vigour, and yet daily growing more strong and able to converse with God. For that great good cannot be known at once, nor can all the sweetness of that life be instantly tasted, nor the uses of those

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 1—13.

pleasures be drunk up at one draught: but fresh delights will continually entertain us; new pleasures will be springing forth unto us; and a flood of joy that we never knew before will overflow us, out of that full fountain which now issues forth in so many streams, and diffuses himself in such great varieties in this world; that our minds may be every moment employed in some rarity of nature, which, till then, did never affect their eyes. A happy life that will be, when we shall have before us such an inexhausted ocean of good to fill us, and such great appetites to be filled, and such repeated satisfaction in the filling of them, and such an increase of strength by their satisfaction; and wider capacities also created by the continual flowing in of that good upon us, which will enlarge our souls by its enjoyment, to make us more able to enjoy it.—PATRICK.

And the door was shut.—Though the happiness or misery of the next world may increase, yet the state can never alter. If we die in a state of grace and favour with God, we shall always continue so: if we die in a state of sin, under the wrath and displeasure of God, there is no altering our state in the other world; we must abide under his wrath for ever.—It ought to be the work and business of our whole lives to prepare for death, which comes but once, but that once is for eternity. What an unpardonable folly for any man to be surprised by death,—to fall into the grave without thinking of it!—We can die but once, and if

we miscarry that once, we are undone for ever.—Who would try how long death will delay its coming? how long he may sin on safely, without thinking of death or judgment, whether death will give him timely notice to repent, or whether God will give him grace to repent if it does? Who would venture the infinite hazards of death-bed repentance?—If men sin on, till they harden themselves in sin, and are forsaken of the grace of God; if death comes long before they expected, and cut them off by surprise and without warning; if their dying and despairing agonies and horrors should not prove a true godly sorrow, nor that repentance to salvation never to be repented of, they are lost to eternity! And what wise man would expose his soul to such a hazard as this?—SHERLOCK.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.—Were we always in a preparation to die, with our lamps trimmed and burning, like virgins who expect the bridegroom, to die then without notice, without fear and apprehension, without the melancholy solemnities of dying, were most desirable. But the danger of a sudden death is that men are surprised in their sins, and hurried away to judgment, before their accounts are ready:—that they are snatched out of this world before they have made any provision for the next. And the only way to prevent this, is to be always upon our watch, always in expectation of death, and

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 14—30.

always prepared for it.—SHERLOCK.

HYMN.

Ye waiting souls, arise,
With all the dead, awake ;
Unto salvation rise,
Oil in your vessels take :
Up starting at the midnight cry
Behold the heavenly bridegroom nigh !

He comes, he comes, to call
The nations to his bar,
And raise to glory all
Who fit for glory are ;
Make ready for your full reward,
Go forth with joy to meet your Lord.

Go meet him in the sky,
Your everlasting Friend ;
Your Head to glorify
With all his saints ascend ;
Ye pure in heart, obtain the grace,
To see, without a veil, his face.

Ye that have here received
The unction from above,
And in his Spirit lived
Obedient to his love ;
Jesus shall claim you for his bride.
Rejoice with all the sanctified !

Rejoice in glorious hope
Of that great day unknown,
When you shall be caught up
To stand before his throne ;
Called to partake the marriage feast,
And lean on our Immanuel's breast.

Then let us wait to hear
The trumpet's welcome sound ;
To see our Lord appear,
May we be watching found ;
Enrobed in righteousness divine
In which the bride shall ever shine !

WESLEY.

§ LXXX.

CHAP. XXV. 14—30.

The Parable of the Talents.

14 ¶ ^a For the kingdom of heaven is 'as a man travelling

into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five ^btalents, to another two, and to another one ; ^c to every man according to his several ability ; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents : behold I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^d I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the ^e joy of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came, and said,

Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold I have gained two other talents beside them.

23 His lord said unto him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that* is thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

29 'For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he

shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant 'into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

† Luke xix. 12.—‡ ch. xxi. 35.—§ A talent is 137½ lb. ch. xviii. 24.—¶ Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 7, 11, 29. Eph. iv. 11.—‡ ch. xxiv. 47; ver. 34, 46. Luke xli. 44; & xlii. 29, 30.—§ Heb. xii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 Pet. i. 8.—¶ ver. 21.—‡ ch. xii. 12. Mark iv. 25. Luke viii. 18; & xix. 26. John xv. 2.—‡ ch. viii. 12; & xxiv. 51.

READER.—*The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another ten, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability.—As we are to serve God with all we are (1 Cor. vi. 20), so also with all we have, (Prov. iii. 9). Whatsoever we have we receive from his bounty, and therefore whatsoever we have we should employ for his glory: our parts, our gifts, our estates, our power, our time. Whatsoever we call ours is his in our hands, and therefore to be improved, not for ourselves, but for him. As our Saviour shows in this parable of the Talents, which the master of the house distributed among his servants; to some he gave one, to some two, to others five, that every one might employ his proportion to his master's use, neither squandering it away, nor yet laying it up in a napkin. It is God that is the grand master and possessor of the world, who parcels it out amongst his creatures, as himself sees good; but whosoever he entrusteth any*

thing, he expects the improvement of it for himself. And so, I suppose, doth every one of us from such servants as we keep; we expect that what we put into their hands be laid out, not for themselves, but for us; and that they spend their time in our service, not their own; and if they do otherwise, there is none of us but will say they do not serve us, but themselves. How then can we expect that God will look upon us as serving him, when we do not so much for him as we expect from our own servants, though our fellow-creatures? Or how can we think that we serve him as we ought, unless we serve him as much as we can? Or that God should look upon us as his servants, unless we employ and improve whatsoever we have, not for our own pleasure, profit, or applause, but for his honour and glory, from whom we did receive it? Let us remember our Saviour's words, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—

BEVERIDGE.

He that received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.—We shall be judged for not improving the talents we are intrusted with;—that is, for not doing good in the world. This many men are apt to forget. To squander away and waste their master's goods, to do that which is evil,—this they think they must give account of; but if they do no hurt, they are not much concerned what good they do. But our Saviour in this parable in-

forms us better,—that we must give an account of our improvements; for he who received but one talent went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money; and when his lord came to reckon with him he said, "Thou wicked servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Here we plainly see that this servant was not punished for spending his master's money, for he returned to him the talent which he gave him,—"*Lo, there thou hast that is thine,*"—but for not improving it, as the other servants had done. He was an unprofitable servant, who had brought no advantage to his master. And thus, it is plain, men judge of servants. He is a very wicked steward indeed, who embezzles his master's goods; but he is an unprofitable servant who makes no improvements: and thus God will judge of us, as we think it reasonable to judge of our servants. And when we consider how many talents we are entrusted with, it should make us humble to think what little improvements we make of them. Every thing that is improvable to the service and glory of God is a talent; and if we do not improve it to God's glory, and to do good in the world, it is a

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 14—30.

talent hid in a napkin, or buried in the earth.”—SHERLOCK.

After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came, &c.—The life to come dependeth upon this; as the reward upon the work, or the runner’s or soldier’s prize upon his race or fighting, or as the merchant’s gain upon his voyage. Heaven is won or lost on earth. The possession is there; but the preparation is here. Christ will judge all men according to their works on earth. ‘Well done, good and faithful servant’ must go before ‘enter thou into the joy of thy lord.’ ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course’ goeth before ‘the crown of righteousness which God, the righteous judge, will give.’ All that can be done for salvation by us must here be done. It was on earth that Christ himself wrought the work of our redemption, fulfilled all righteousness, became our ransom, and paid the price of our salvation; and it is here that our part is to be done.

And the bestowing of the reward is God’s work, who we are sure will never fail. There is no place for the least suspicion or fear of his misdoing or failing in any part of his undertaken work; but the danger and fear is of our own miscarrying, lest we be not found capable of receiving what God will certainly give to all that are disposed receivers. To distrust God is heinous sin and folly; but to distrust ourselves we have great cause.

And it is great and difficult work that must here be done. It is here that we must be cured of all condemning sin, that we must be regenerate and new-born, that we must be pardoned and justified by faith; it is here that we must be united to Christ, made wise to salvation, renewed by his Spirit, and conformed to his likeness. It is here that we must overcome all the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and perform all the duties towards God and man that must be rewarded. It is here that Christ must be believed in with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth confessed unto salvation. It is here that we must suffer with him that we may reign with him; and be faithful to the death that we may receive a crown of life. Here we must so run that we may obtain.

And we have greater work here to do than the mere securing of our own salvation. We are members of the world and church, and we must labour to do good to many. We are trusted with our master’s talents for his service in our places to do our best to propagate his truth, and grace, and church, and to bring him souls, and to honour his cause, and edify his flock, and further the salvation of as many as we can. All this is to be done on earth, if we will secure the end of all in heaven.—
BAXTER.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall

be taken away even that which he hath.
 —Dream not that God will save the wicked, no, nor equally reward the slothful and the diligent, because Christ's righteousness was perfect. Paternal justice maketh difference according to that worthiness which is so denominated by the law of grace; and as sin is its own punishment, holiness and obedience is much of its own reward: whatever God appointeth thee to do, see that thou do it sincerely, and with all thy might. Stir up, O my soul, thy sincere desires, and all thy faculties, to do the remnant of the work of Christ appointed thee on earth; and then joyfully to wait for the heavenly perfection in God's own time.—BAXTER.

HYMN.

And is this life prolonged to me,
 Are days and seasons given?
 O let me then prepare to be
 A fitter heir of heaven!

In vain these moments shall not pass,
 These golden hours be gone;
 Lord, I accept thine offer'd grace,
 I bow before thy throne.

Now cleanse my soul from every sin
 By my Redeemer's blood:
 Now let my flesh and soul begin
 The honours of my God.

Let me no more my soul beguile
 With sin's deceitful toys;
 Let cheerful hope increasing still
 Approach to heavenly joys.

My thankful lips shall loud proclaim
 The wonders of thy praise;
 And spread the savour of thy name
 Where'er I spend my days.

On earth let my example shine;
 And, when I leave this state,
 May heaven receive this soul of mine,
 To bliss supremely great.

WATTS.

§ LXXXI.

CHAP. XXV. 31—46.

The description of the last Judgment.

31 ¶ 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And 'before him shall be gathered all nations: and 'he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, 'inherit the kingdom 'prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 ' For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: 'I was a stranger and ye took me in:

36 ' Naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: 'I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, "Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, "Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment:

but the righteous into life eternal.

e Zech. xiv. 5. ch. xvi. 27; & xix. 28. Mark viii. 28. Acts i. 11. 1 Thea. iv. 16. 2 Thea. i. 7. Jude 14. Rev. i. 7.—f Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12.—g Eze. xx. 28; & xxxiv. 17. 20. ch. xiii. 40.—h Rom. viii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 4. 9; & iii. 9. Rev. xxi. 7.—i ch. xx. 23. Mark x. 40. 1 Cor. ii. 9. Heb. xi. 16.—j Is. lviii. 7. Ezek. xviii. 7. Jam. i. 27.—k Heb. xiii. 2. 3 John 5.—l Jam. ii. 15, 16.—m 2 Tim. i. 16.—n Prov. xiv. 31; & xix. 17. ch. x. 42. Mark ix. 41. Heb. vi. 10.—o Pa. vi. 8. ch. vii. 28. Luke xli. 27.—p ch. xiii. 40, 42.—q 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.—r Prov. xiv. 31; & xvii. 5. Zech. ii. 8. Acts ix. 5.—s Dan. xii. 2. John v. 29. Rom. ii. 7, &c.

READER. *Before him shall be gathered all nations.*—When our bodies, by the word of the Almighty God, shall have been called together again, our souls will be all prepared to meet them; and so both "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," to receive sentence according to what they have done in the flesh, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. And though it is very difficult, or rather impossible, for me to conceive or determine the particular circumstance of this grand assize, or manner and method how it shall be managed, yet, from the light and intimations that God has vouchsafed to give us of it, I have ground to believe, it will be ordered and carried on after this, or the like, manner.

The day and place being appointed by the King of kings, the glorious Majesty of heaven, and Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, who long ago received his commission from the Father, to be the "judge of the quick and dead," "shall descend from heaven with the shout of the archangel, and with the trump of God," royally attended with an innumerable company of glorious angels. These he shall send with the great sound of a trumpet, and

they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other, yea, and the wicked too, from whatsoever place they shall be in; and then shall he 'sever the wicked from the just.' So that all nations, and every particular person, that ever did, or ever shall, live upon the face of the earth, shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left.

Things being thus set in order, the judge shall read his commission, i. e. declare and manifest himself to be the judge of all the earth, sent by the God of heaven to judge them that had condemned him, and in that very body that was once crucified upon the cross, at Jerusalem, for our sins. So that all the world shall then behold him shining in all his glory and majesty, and shall acknowledge him to be now, what they would not believe him to be before, even both God and man, and so the judge of all the world, from whom there can be no appeal.

And having thus declared his commission, the first work he will go upon, will be to open the book of God's remembrance, and to cause all the indictments to be read, that are there found on record against those on his right hand; but, behold, all the black lines of their sins being blotted out, with the red lines of their Saviour's blood, and nothing but their good works, their prayers,

their sermons, their meditations, their alms, and the like, to be found there; the righteous judge, before whom they stand, turning himself before them, with a serene and smiling countenance, will declare to them, before all the world, that their sins are pardoned, and their persons accepted by him, as having believed in him; and therefore will he immediately proceed to pronounce the happy sentence of election on them, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The sentence being thus pronounced, the righteous (and I hope myself amongst the rest) shall go up with shouts of joy and triumph, to sit with our blessed Redeemer, to judge the other parts of the world, who are at the left hand of the tribunal, with ghastly countenances and trembling hearts, to receive their last and dreadful doom. Against these all the sins that they committed, or were guilty of, shall be brought in judgment against them, as they are found on record in the book of God's remembrance, and the indictments read against every particular person, high or low, for every particular sin, great or small, which they have committed. And the truth of this indictment shall be attested by their own consciences, crying, guilty, guilty; I say, by their own consciences, which are as a thousand witnesses; yea, and by the omniscience of God too, which is as a thousand consciences. And, therefore, without any further

delay, shall the judge proceed to pronounce the sentence, the doleful sentence, of condemnation upon them, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." This, or such like, will be the method of Christ's proceeding with us in that great and terrible day of trial and retribution. Oh! may these awful thoughts and ideas of it always accompany me, and strike such a deep and lively impression upon my heart, in every action of life, as to deter me from offending this just and Almighty Being, in whose power it is to destroy both soul and body in hell, and engage me in such a regular, strict and conscientious course of life, as to be always ready, whenever he shall please to summon me, to give in my accounts at the great audit, and with an holy assurance fly for mercy und succour into the hands of my Redeemer, and be permitted to enter into the joys of his rest.

—BEVERIDGE.

He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.—This is the last and final separation. Good and bad men will never meet and intermix with each other after this. They live together in this world, and converse together; are united by relation and interest; are members of the same church; and worship God together in the same holy communion of prayers and sacraments: but they must part company at the day of judgment, the one to the right hand and

the other to the left. Men are very apt to flatter themselves now that they will fare the better for the company they keep; they hope not so much to be made better by their company, as to escape the better with them. But they should remember that the tares and the wheat grow together in the same field, but yet have a very different end; the one is gathered into the barn, the other is burnt: and that good and bad fish are taken in the same net, but they are separated at the day of judgment. All our separations now will avail us nothing, unless we take care to be found in the number of Christ's sheep, when we come to judgment—SHERLOCK.

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c.—Though we shall be judged for all the good and evil we have done, yet our Saviour, in describing the process of the last judgment, makes no mention of anything but acts of charity.—It concerns us to take notice of this, and to enquire what the meaning of it is.

Now, in the *First* place, there is no doubt but our Saviour's intention in this was very powerfully to recommend all acts of charity to us.—*Secondly*, He hereby signifies that this divine charity is the perfection of all other Christian graces and virtues, and comprehends them all; for it is certain that no man will be saved without an universal righteousness, and yet our Saviour enquires only after charity, as the mark and criterion of an universal righteousness; for where that is in

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 31—46.

sincerity, there is a combination of all other graces. Our Saviour tells us that the Love of God and Men is the sum of the Law and the Prophets; Matt. xxii. 36—40. He that loves his neighbour will do him no hurt, but will do him all the good he can. And this divine love of men results from the love of God, whose creatures they are, and whose image they bear, and therefore includes the love of God as its cause; for there is no other principle of universal love and charity, though of particular friendships there is. And therefore St. John makes this the trial of our love to God; 1 John iv. 20, 21.—Divine charity flows from the love of God and Christ, when we love men for God's sake, and Christians as the members and the brethren of Christ. This charity contains the exercise of all other Christian graces; where this is no other grace is wanting, it is the universal habit of grace, the very nature of God; 1 John iv. 7—12. But, on the other hand, an uncharitable man can have no good in him, and he has the seeds and principles of all evil. Uncharitableness is owing to self-love, and to the love of this world; and, where these two are, there can be no good, but there may be all the wickedness that human nature is capable of.—And though our Saviour only mentions the outward acts of charity, in feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and the prisoners, because he will not allow of the pretence of charity without charitable actions, yet he supposes that these

charitable actions flow from a true principle of divine charity, from the love of God and men.—*Thirdly*, This is a manifest proof that the rewards of good men at the day of judgment are wholly owing to the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; that the reward is of grace not of debt.—Our Saviour bestows heaven upon good men as a reward of their kindness to himself; and we all know the difference between rewarding kindnesses and paying debts, or rewarding men according to their deserts.—No works we can do can deserve such a reward; but when Christ rewards our kindness, not our works, the reward must bear proportion to his own grace, not to our deserts. He may reward as liberally as he pleases, for when the reward is of grace, not of debt, no reward can be too great for infinite grace to bestow, though it may be too great for our works to deserve.—*Fourthly*, We must consider mankind as sinners, obnoxious to the judgments of God, who must be pardoned before they are rewarded. Now, when both the pardon and the reward is wholly of grace and mercy, has that man any title to either, who will show no mercy?—If heaven be not given to a sinner, he can never have it; if his sins be not pardoned by grace, justice must lay hold on him, and sentence him to everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.—SHERLOCK.

HYMN.

Jesus, my Lord, how rich thy grace,
Thy bounties how complete!
How can I count the matchless sum?
How pay the mighty debt!

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 1—16.

High on a throne of radiant light
Dost thou exalted shine ;
What can my poverty bestow,
When all the worlds are thine ?

But thou hast brethren here below,
The partners of thy grace ;
And wilt confess their humble names,
Before thy Father's face.

In them thou may'st be cloth'd and fed,
And visited, and cheer'd ;
And in their accents of distress,
My Saviour's voice is heard !

DODDRIDGE.

§ LXXXII.

CHAP. XXVI. 1—16.

*The rulers conspire against Christ.
The woman anointeth his head. Judas
selleth him.*

AND it came to pass, when
Jesus had finished all these
sayings, he said unto his disci-
ples,

2 * Ye know that after two
days is *the feast of the passover*,
and the Son of man is betrayed
to be crucified.

3 * Then assembled together
the chief priests, and the scribes,
and the elders of the people,
unto the palace of the high
priest, who was called Caiaphas.

4 And consulted that they
might take Jesus by subtlety,
and kill *him*.

5 But they said, Not on the
feast day, lest there be an up-
roar among the people.

6 ¶ * Now when Jesus was

in " Bethany, in the house of
Simon the leper,

7 There came unto him a
woman having an alabaster box
of very precious ointment, and
poured it on his head, as he sat
at meat.

8 * But when his disciples saw
it, they had indignation, saying,
To what purpose is this waste ?

9 For this ointment might
have been sold for much, and
given to the poor.

10 When Jesus understood
it, he said unto them, Why
trouble ye the woman ? for she
hath wrought a good work
upon me.

11 / For ye have the poor
always with you ; but * me ye
have not always.

12 For in that she hath pour-
ed this ointment on my body,
she did it for my burial.

13 Verily I say unto you,
Wheresoever this gospel shall
be preached in the whole world,
there shall also this, that this
woman hath done, be told for a
memorial of her.

14 ¶ * Then one of the
twelve, called ' Judas Iscariot,
went unto the chief priests,

15 And said *unto them*
* What will ye give me, and I
will deliver him unto you ?
And they covenanted with them
for thirty pieces of silver.

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 1—16.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

^a Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 1. John xiii. 1.—^b Ps. ii. 2. John ii. 47. Acts iv. 25. &c.—^c Mark xiv. 3. John xi. 1. 2. & xii. 2.—^d ch. xxi. 17.—^e John xii. 4.—^f Deu. xv. 11. John xii. 8.—^g See ch. xviii. 20; & xxviii. 20. John xiii. 33; & xiv. 19; & xvi. 5. 26; & xvii. 11.—^h Mark xiv. 16. Luke xxii. 3. John xiii. 2. 30.—ⁱ ch. x. 4. ^j Zech. xi. 12. ch. xvii. 3.

Reader. The piece of silver mentioned in the text, ver. 15, was the shekel, a Jewish coin, in value about two shillings and threepence of our money. So that the thirty pieces of silver (the price of a slave; see Ex. xxi. 32), for which Judas betrayed our Lord, amounted to about three pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence. According to some calculations, the amount is a little more. The coin may have been a stater, instead of a shekel; in value about the same.—See Zechariah xi. 12—17.

READER.—*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her.* St. Mark adds our Saviour's brief, but affecting, remark, so full of encouragement for all those whose means are slender, while their love is sincere and their intentions bountiful,—"She hath done what she could." Mark xiv. 8.

Grace finds a way to exert itself in every estate where it exists, and regulates the soul according to the particular duties of that estate. Whether it find a man high or low, a master or a servant, it requires not a change of his station, but it works a change

on his heart, and teaches him how to live in it. A skilful engraver makes you a statue indifferently of wood or stone or marble, as they are put into his hand; so grace forms a man to a Christian way of walking in any state. There is a way for him in the meanest condition to glorify God, and to adorn the profession of religion; no state so low as to be shut out from that. And a rightly informed and rightly affected conscience towards God shows a man that way and causes him to walk in it. As the astrologers say that the same stars which made Cyrus to be chosen king amongst the armies of men when he came to be a man made him to be chosen king among the shepherd's children when he was a child; thus grace will have its proper operation in every estate.

In this men readily deceive themselves; they can do any thing well in imagination, better than the real task that is in their hands. They think that if they had the abilities and opportunities that some men have, they would do much more for religion and for God than they do; and yet they do nothing but spoil a far lower part than that which is their own and is given them to study and act aright in. But our folly and self-ignorance abuse us. It is not our part to choose what we should be, but to be what we are to his glory who gives us to be such. Be thy condition ever so mean, yet thy conscience toward God, if it be within thee, will find itself work in that. If it be little that is entrusted to thee, in regard of thy outward condition, or any other way, be thou faithful in that little,

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 1—16.

as our Saviour speaks, and thy reward shall not be little ; he will make thee ruler over much.—LEIGHTON.

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?— The person that ventured on this height of impiety was Judas Iscariot, a man who by this treason hath indeed left an everlasting name behind him, but such an one as all ages must detest, and talk of with greater indignation than the heathen did of Herostratus, who, to make himself illustrious by doing mischief, burnt the famous temple of Diana. By this man the ever-blessed Jesus was betrayed ; and some may see in this glass their own treachery and deformity.

He was betrayed by one who made profession of religion, but was a hypocrite ; that is, his actions contradicted his profession,—professing one thing he did another, and seeming to be good he proved a devil. Hypocrisy at this day makes men traitors to Christ ; even their coming to the temple of the Lord, and adhering to their known sins,—their frequenting the ordinances of God, and being unconcerned at his promises and threatenings ; their believing the articles of religion and acting contrary to the design of them ; their finding fault with those sins in others which they have no aversion from in themselves ; their speaking honourably of God with their lips, and dispensing with affronts put upon him in their practices. What can we call this but, Judas like, to betray the Son of man

with a kiss ; to say Hail, Master, and deliver him to be crucified ?

He was betrayed by one who, by no argument of love or money, could be wrought into a sincere reformation. He had seen the miracles of his master ; himself, by his master's influence, did wonders, and he saw Divinity shine in him. Nor was Christ wanting in warning, teaching, instructing, entreating, and admonishing him, yet nothing could prevail with him to purge out the leaven of malice and wickedness. And is not Christ betrayed this way by thousands at this day ? If his calling to men, by his ministers, by signal providence, by mercies, by afflictions, by their consciences, by weakness, and approaching death, will not make them sensible of their duty ; if, in despite of his endeavours to keep them from being undone, they scorn both his yoke and his love, what greater treason can they be guilty of ? Especially where they make his mercy a shelter for their sin ; are therefore evil because he is good, and are tempted by his patience to be refractory and obstinate.—HORNECK.

And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.—Thirty pieces of silver invited the traitor to this enterprise. "The love of money is the root of all evil." So powerful is gold and silver, that at this day it tempts men to betray the Son of God. They care not what becomes of religion, so that their purses swell ; and are indifferent whether God's honour be maintained or no, so that their corn and wine

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 17—35.

and oil increaseth. This makes men venture on the foulest sins, and draws them into actions which should not be so much as named among Christians. This tempts them to oppress, to cheat, to flatter, to dissemble, to lie, and to forswear themselves, to comply with the sinful humours of men, and to debase their souls to the most dishonourable actions. Yet, all this while, such will be accounted Christians!—HORNECK.

As we abhor and detest the treason of Judas, so let us take heed that we do not become guilty of it ourselves. We are not in a capacity of acting that very treason which this false disciple did, because Christ is not now on earth, and the circumstances of time, place, and government differ. Yet that treason may be acted over again, by a behaviour and conversation agreeable to that of Judas. Let us not fall into the snare into which that unhappy man fell. His end, his despair, the terrors of his mind, the torments of his conscience, the contempt and scorn of God and men into which he rushed, are sufficient discouragements from that hypocrisy which drove him on to those precipices. To maintain invincible loyalty to our great master, is not only our duty but our interest. To promote whatever makes for his honour and glory is that which becomes us, not only as we are his subjects, but as we are redeemed with his blood. So great a mercy ought to crush every rebellious thought in our minds.—HORNECK.

HYMN.

Prepare a thankful song
To the Redeemer's name ;
His praises should employ each tongue,
And every heart inflame.

He laid his glories by
And shame and death endur'd,
That guilty rebels, doom'd to die,
From wrath might be secur'd.

And now he pleading stands
Before his Father's throne ;
And satisfies the law's demands
With what himself hath done.

The Holy Ghost he sends
Our stubborn wills to move,
To make his enemies his friends
And conquer them by love.

O may we not refuse
Such rich unbounded grace,
Nor Satan's bondage longer choose
But seek the Saviour's face !

NEWTON.

§ LXXXIII.

CHAP. XXVI. 17—35.

Christ eateth the passover ; instituteth his holy supper.

17 ¶ ' Now the first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover ?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The master saith, My time is at hand ; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them ; and they made ready the passover.

20 " Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I ?

23 And he answered and said, " He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth ^oas it is written of him : but ^rwoe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I ? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 ¶ ^rAnd as they were eating, ^rJesus took bread, and ^blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; ^rthis is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, ^rDrink ye all of it ;

28 For ^rthis is my blood ^oof the new testament, which is shed ^rfor many for the remission of sins.

29 But ^rI say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, ^ountil that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 ^oAnd when they had sung an ^hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, ^oAll ye shall ^rbe offended because of me this night : for it is written, ^oI will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after I am risen again, ^rI will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, ^rVerily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

^r Ex. xii. 6, 18. Mark xiv. 12. Luke xxii. 7.—^o Mark xiv. 17—21. Luke xxii. 14. John xiii. 21.—^r Ps. xli. 9. Luke xxii. 21. John xiii. 18.—^o Ps. xxii. 18. Dan ix. 26. Mark iv. 12. Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 46. Acts xvii. 2, 3 ; xxvi. 22, 23. 1 Cor. xv. 3.—^r John xvii. 12.—^o Mark xiv. 22. Luke xxii. 19.—^r 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25.—^r Many

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 17—35.

Greek copies have, *good thanks*. See Mark vi. 41.—*l* 1 Cor. x. 16.—*f* Mark xiv. 23.—*v* See Exod. xxiv. 8 *Lev.* xvii. 11.—*r* Jer. xxxi. 31.—*y* ch. xx. 28. Rom. v. 15. Heb. ix. 22.—*g* Mark xiv. 25. Luke xxii. 19.—*a* Acta x. 41.—*b* Mark xiv. 26.—*l* *Or. psalm.*—*c* Mark xiv. 27. John xvi. 32.—*d* ch. xi. 6.—*e* Zech. xiii. 7.—*f* ch. xviii. 7, 10, 16. Mark xiv. 28; & xvi. 7.—*g* Mark xiv. 30. Luke xvii. 34. John xiii. 38.

Reader. There can be little need of explanation of the plain, but affecting and solemn, details which are here set before us.

Any person of common capacity, and honest mind, who has been instructed in the truths of religion without an admixture of popish superstition, may easily understand what our Lord meant when he said of the bread and the wine, which he appointed as memorials of his death, "This is my body, This is my blood." It was the same as though he had said, This is a sign or token of my body broken, and my blood poured out:—just as when we read in Ex. xiii. 11, "It is the Lord's pass-over" we understand those words to mean, It is a sign or token of the Lord's passing over the houses of the children of Israel.

The words "new testament" in verse 28 mean "new covenant."

The hymn which was sung by our Lord and his disciples (v. 30) consisted probably of Psalms, 113—118, which were usually sung by the Jews at the Passover.

READER.—*The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples.*—How often, O my soul, hath the great Master attempted to enter into thy heart, and to make that his guest-chamber! And how ill-natured hast thou been in refusing so great a guest, whose presence would have enriched thee with in-

finite treasure! Temporal profit, honour, ease, and pleasure have but gently knocked at the door, and thou hast listened, and heard, and run to open to them. See where thy love and thy treasure lies.—**HORNECK.**

They were exceeding sorrowful; and began every one of them to say unto him. Lord, is it I? Self examination is the only way to come to a right knowledge of ourselves. Yet how careless, O my soul, hast thou been of this duty! How easily mightest thou have found that thou wert guilty of such a sin, and didst transgress such a command; but thou wouldest not. How much better is it to be acquainted with our own hearts than to be strangers to ourselves! And what danger dost thou involve thyself in, for want of this holy search! How dost thou prepare for self delusion! The disease being known, it may be cured; but, lying hid, it kills, and destroys, when we think all safe. How easy a matter were it, to inquire whether thou art that hypocrite, that unprofitable servant, that loiterer, that slothful person, that busy body, which the Holy Ghost condemns. Yet thou hast shunned this search, and been afraid of it, as of prison; whereas it was the only medicine from which thou mayest promise thyself a happy recovery.—**HORNECK.**

The Son of man goeth, as it was written of Him. It was wickedly and maliciously done by men against him; but it was determined, wisely and graciously, by his Father, with

his own consent. As in these two-faced pictures:—look upon the crucifying of Christ one way, as plotted by a treacherous disciple, and malicious priests and rulers, and nothing more deformed and hateful than the authors of it; but view it again, as determined by God's counsel for the restoring of lost mankind, and it is full of unspeakable beauty and sweetness, infinite wisdom and love, in every trait of it.—LEIGHTON.

But woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.—Whenever men provoke God to withdraw his protection, that moment the devil takes them under his power, and, as the Scriptures say, leads them captive at his will.—Judas was not now his own master; so that neither fear for himself, nor love for his Lord, nor the baseness of the crime, could prevail with him to repent of his evil project. You will perhaps say, that if he was not his own master, his crime was the less. By no means. He might have continued under the protection of God, if it had not been his own fault. It is true, the devil is still seeking whom he may devour; that is, whom he may be permitted to devour; but then, we are well assured that he is permitted to be master of none but such as, by a course of wilful, presumptuous, sins, have forced the Spirit of God to leave them to themselves.

It is a very unwarrantable way of speaking, which some people use, when they hear of any person falling into evil courses, or coming to some

ill end. They say, he was born to it,—it was his fortune,—and the like. Pray hear what Christ said of Judas, “Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed.” Jesus Christ would not have said so, if Judas had not brought this evil upon his own head, by hardening his heart, and adding one sin to another, until God thought fit to permit the devil to enter into him; and then he filled up the measure of his iniquities.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, &c.—The Lord's Supper was ordained, not for the repetition, but the continual remembrance, of the sacrifice of Christ. The outward signs in it, are bread and wine; both which the Lord hath commanded to be received by all Christians, and both which are accordingly received, and not changed and transubstantiated into the real and natural body and blood of Christ: which, however, the faithful and they only, do, under this representation of it, verily and indeed receive, into a most beneficial union with themselves,—that is, do verily and indeed, by a spiritual connection with their incarnate Redeemer and Head through faith, partake, in this ordinance, of that heavenly favour and grace which, by offering up his body and blood, he hath procured for his true disciples and members.—SECKER.

As Christ broke the bread, so it is justly supposed that he did eat of it himself; for this was the custom among the Jews, for the master of the family, who broke the bread,

to eat of it himself.—But if Christ did eat of the consecrated bread himself, the doctrine of transubstantiation, that idol of the Church of Rome, falls to the ground; for from hence it would follow, that Christ did eat and devour himself, which as it is absurd, so it wants very little of being ridiculous.

When thou seest the holy bread broken before thine eyes in this Sacrament, thou must not look upon this as an empty ceremony; but thy soul must flee away to Gethsemane, walk about Golgatha, take a turn on the Mount of Olives, and stand still awhile on Moriah, and behold how the innocent Isaac is bound on the altar, how the Son of God hangs on the infamous tree, a spectacle to angels and to men. See here, my sins, what work ye have made, what injury ye have done. Ye pulled down the Son of God from the mansions of glory; ye afflicted, persecuted, broke him here on earth, and left him not till ye had killed and murdered him! How shall I be revenged upon you? How shall I testify my concern at the sufferings of the Lord Jesus? How shall I convince the holy angels that stand about me that I condole with him? Pride and desire of vain-glory, thou shalt die! Envy and malice thou shalt live no longer in my soul! Wrath and anger, thou shalt be dispatched! Hypocrisy and covetousness, thou shalt be broke to pieces! Intemperance and luxury, thou shalt breathe thy last! I will harbour no murderers in my bosom; no

such traitors shall lodge in my house. O blessed Master! Shall I see thy head broken with thorns, and not cry out, O that my head were water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears? Shall I see thy face broken with grief, and not blush at my daring sins that broke it thus? Break, stubborn heart! Break, my perverse and ungovernable will! Break, my headstrong passions! O Jesus break these cockatrice eggs, and let all the poison evaporate; then thy servant shall be whole.

Hear this, thou broken, thou contrite penitent. Hear this, thou distressed soul, that art broken with a sense of sin, who feelest the burden heavy, and bowest under it. Behold the rock that was broken for thee; and of the waters that flow from it, drink; yea, drink abundantly. Hide thyself in the holes, in the clefts of the rock; hither flee for refuge. When devils haunt thee, when temptations follow thee, when despair, like the avenger of blood, is at thy heels, run into this city of refuge, save thyself in this Zoar. Here fear no storm, no waves, no tempest; here all travailing and weary souls find rest; here devils have no power, for they are conquered, their dominion is taken away, their empire broken. Here is balm of Gilead; here is the physician, whose blood is for the healing of the nations; here fix, though the earth be moved; here shelter thyself from the wrath to come. Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Heb. xiii. 8.—HORNECK.

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 17—35.

I say unto you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.—Whenever the memorial of the death of Christ is celebrated in the Lord's Supper, let us be careful, by faith, to apply it to ourselves, and to be qualified to do so by a due preparation; each of us saying in his heart, This body and blood were given and shed for me: the minister of God assures me of it, and I do faithfully trust in it. It was for this reason that Jesus Christ ordained that holy Sacrament, that we might be often obliged to remember his love for us; his bitter sufferings; the occasion of his death; the misery we have thereby escaped, if it be not our own fault; and the happiness he has obtained for us; that we may be obliged, by all the motives of interest and gratitude, to love him with all our heart and soul, and to put our whole trust in his mercy. Then will our own death whenever it shall happen, be a blessing to us, and better than the day of our birth; when nothing in this world can be a comfort to us, but a firm faith in Jesus Christ, and what he has done and suffered for our salvation. We shall then see the importance of a true faith, and set a true value upon the blood of Christ, when every thing else will yield us no substantial comfort; when we can say with the Apostle, I know in whom I have believed, even in the Son of God, who came to seek and to save lost sinners, and who gave his life to redeem them

from the second death.—WILSON.

O Jesus, who hast loved us, and washed us from our sins, and purchased us by thy own blood, and didst ordain this sacrament, in order to secure us to thyself, by a grateful remembrance of what thou hast done and suffered for us, make me truly sensible of thy love, and of our sad condition, which did require such a sacrifice.—May I always receive this pledge of thy love, the offers of mercy, pardon, and grace, tendered to us in this holy ordinance, with a thankful heart, and in remembrance of Thee, our great and best benefactor; in remembrance of thy holy example, of thy heavenly doctrine, of thy laborious life, of thy bitter passion and death, of thy glorious resurrection, of thy ascension into heaven, and of thy coming again to judge the world!—And may I never forget the obligations thou hast laid upon us, to live as becomes thy disciples, and to forsake every course of life contrary to thy gospel! Cease not, O Lord, to love us; and by thy grace vouchsafed in this ordinance, cause us to love thee with all our hearts. Amen.—WILSON.

If you love God, and your neighbour though not so fervently as you could wish; if you have a real desire of being better than at present you find yourselves to be; if the fruits of the Holy Spirit, though in a very low degree, do appear in your life; lastly, if you do daily pray for God's graces, that you may in his good time be what he would have you to

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 36—46.

be, and do not live in any known sin; by no means forbear to go to this ordinance, as often as you have an opportunity; and depend upon God's blessing, and an increase of his grace.—WILSON.

Peter answered and said unto him, though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.—Peter said unto him though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. Preserve me, O Lord, from a presumptuous opinion, and dependence on my own strength, without the aids of thy grace. Let me see, in this sad instance, my weakness without thy assistance, and my ruin without thy help.—WILSON.

HYMN.

This do in remembrance of me. Luke xxii. 19.

According to thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember Thee.

Thy body, broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be;
Thy testamental cup I take,
And thus remember Thee.

Gethsemane can I forget?
Or there thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember Thee?

When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice,
I must remember Thee!

Remember Thee, and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse, remains,
Will I remember Thee!

And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and mem'ry flee,

When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me!

MONTGOMERY.

§ LXXXIV.

CHAP. XXVI. 36—46.

Christ prayeth in the garden.

36 ¶ ^a Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter and 'the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then saith he unto them, ^a My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and 'prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, " let this cup pass from me: nevertheless ° not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 ^p Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 He went away again the

second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

A Mark xiv. 32—35. Luke xxii. 39. John xviii. 1.—
I ch. iv. 21.—*John* xii. 27.—*Mark* xiv. 36. Luke xxii.
42. Heb. v. 7.—*John* xii. 27.—*Mark* ch. xx. 22.—*John*
v. 30; & vi. 38. Phil. ii. 8.—*Mark* xiii. 33; & xiv. 38.
Luke xxii. 40, 46. Ephes. vi. 18.

Reader. "The place called Gethsemane," mentioned in this most solemn and affecting portion of the sacred narrative, was a garden, or plantation of trees, for the most part, probably, olive trees. The name denotes an olive press, i. e. a press for extracting oil from the olive.

We observe that our blessed Lord took with him on this occasion the three disciples who had been taken apart from the others to witness the raising of the ruler's daughter, and the transfiguration on the Mount;

namely, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, i. e. Peter, and James, and John.

It is remarkable that our blessed Saviour, in his prayer, repeated the same words, or nearly so, three times successively;—a proof that "repetition" in prayer is not "vain" when it proceeds from earnestness of feeling, or exists together with truth and sincerity of devotion.

In ver. 45, the words "Sleep on now and take your rest" may be translated interrogatively, as an expression of surprise or reproof. "Do ye still sleep and take your rest?" Luther's translation is to this effect.

READER. *He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* Hence we may learn how much we ought to hate sin, which arms the law, justice, and power of God against us. As hateful as it is unto God, so hateful it is itself; for he judgeth uprightly, he seeth things just as they are, without passion, prejudice, or partiality; and as hateful as it is itself, so hateful should it be unto us, as the only ground of our misery, of the creature's vanity, and of God's dishonour. We see it is so hateful unto God that he will most certainly be avenged of it. If he spare me, yet he will not spare my sins, though his own beloved Son must be punished for it. Oh then, why should that be light to

me which was as heavy as a millstone to the soul of Christ? Why should that be my pleasure, which was his suffering? Why that be upon a throne with me which was on a cross with him? Why should I allow that to be really in me, which the Lord so severely punished when the guilt thereof was but imputed to his Son? Many sins there are which [some] esteem as light and venial. But, however, let us not dare esteem that a light thing, for which Christ died. And woful had it been for men, if Christ had not, in his body on the tree, carried as well the guilt of our idle words, our vain thoughts, our loose and impertinent actions, as of our oaths, execrations, and blasphemies. If great sins were as the spear and nails, certainly small sins were as the thorns which pierced his head. And therefore we should learn, with David, to hate every evil way, because God hates it, and suffers it not to pass unpunished; to revenge the quarrel of Christ against those lusts of ours which nailed him to his cross, and to crucify them for him again; and for that end was Christ crucified, "that our old man might be crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. vi. 6.—REYNOLDS.

Oh, what a condition will that man be in, who must stand, or rather everlastingly sink and be crushed, under the weight of that wrath against sin which amazed and made heavy unto death the soul of Christ himself;—which made him

who had the strength of the Deity to support him, the fulness of the Spirit to sanctify and prepare him, the message of an angel to comfort him, the relation of a beloved Son to refresh him, the voice of his Father from heaven testifying unto him that he was heard in that he feared, the assurance of an ensuing glory and victory to encourage him,—which made, I say, even the Son of God himself, notwithstanding all these abatements, to pray, with strong cries and bloody drops and woful conflicts of the soul, against the cup of his Father's wrath.—REYNOLDS.

O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.—If it be objected, that Christ's death was against his own will for he exceedingly feared it (Heb. v. 7.), and prayed earnestly against it, as a thing contrary to his will,—to this I answer, that all this doth not hinder, but commend his willingness and obedience. Consider him in private as a man, of the same natural affections, desires and abhorrences with other men; and consider the cup as it was, a very bitter cup;—and so he most justly feared and declined it, as knowing that it would be a most woful and a heavy combat which he was entering upon. But consider him in his public relation, as a Mediator, a surety, a merciful and faithful High Priest,—and so he most willingly and obediently submitted unto it. And this willingness, by reason of his office, was much the greater, because

by reason of his nature, his will could not but shrink from it. It is easy to be willing in such a service as is suitable to our natural condition and affections; but when nature shall necessarily shrink, sweat, startle, and stand amazed at a service, then not to repent nor decline, nor fling off the burden, but with submission of heart to lie down under it, this is, of all others, the greatest obedience. It was the voice of nature, and the presence of the just and implanted desires of the flesh to say, "Let it pass from me;" it was the retraction of mercy and duty to say, "Glorify thyself." "Whatever my nature desires, whatever my will declines, whatever becomes of me, yet still glorify thyself, and save thy church: if it cannot otherwise be, then, by drinking this bitter cup, thy will be done."—REYNOLDS.

O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done.—The Scripture giveth principally these reasons why Christ suffered these things:—to execute the decree of his Father, Acts iv. 27, 28;—to fulfil the prophecies, prefigurations, and predictions, of holy Scriptures, Luke xxiv. 46;—to magnify his mercy and free love to sinners and most impotent enemies, Rom. v. 8;—to declare the righteousness and truth of God against sin, who would not be reconciled with sinners but upon a legal expiation, Rom. iii. 25. For although we may not limit the unsearchable wisdom and ways of God, as if he could no other ways

have saved man: yet we are bound to adore this means, as being by him selected out of that infinite treasure of his own counsel, as most convenient to set forth his wonderful hatred of sin, his inexorable justice and severity against it, his unsearchable riches of love and mercy towards sinners, and in all things to make way to the manifestation of his glory. But further to show forth his own power, which had strength to stand under all this punishment of sin, and at last to shake it off, and to declare himself to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4. For, though Christ did exceedingly fear, and for that seems to decline and pray against these his sufferings; yet not out of jealousy or suspicion that he should not break through them. But he feared them as being pains unavoidable, which he was most certain to suffer; and as pains very heavy and grievous which he should not overcome without much bitterness, and very woful conflict.—REYNOLDS.

Thy will be done.—It is the desire of a Christian, that his own will may be annihilated, and the will of God placed in its room; that he may have no will but God's; that he may be altogether subject both to God's commanding and his working will, to do what he commands, and to be heartily content with what he does.—And He who taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" gives us his own example in this. He did the will of his

MATTHEW XXVI. 36—46.

Father indeed as it is done in heaven, and he came to the earth for that purpose: "Then said he, Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God." And, in that great and most painful part of his work, "Not my will, but thine be done." For our actions, let his word be our guide; and for the events of things, and all that concerns us, let his good pleasure and wise disposing be our will. Let us give up the rudder of our life into his hand, to be steered by him.—LEIGHTON.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Sleepiness and idleness is the devil's opportunity to persuade us into sin. Had the disciples prayed, instead of sleeping, it is possible they would not have fled when they saw danger nigh.—And hath not the devil prevailed with us by idleness? When we have taken our rest and ease, has not Satan thrown some ill thoughts into our minds? When we have not known how to spend our time, has not the enemy made us to swallow the dangerous bait? When we have stretched ourselves upon our couch, and indulged ourselves, have we not then felt our love to God decay, and our affections to the world increase, and our faculties to dissolve into vanity and voluptuousness, and contempt of better things?—HORNECK.

Make us, O Lord, ever mindful of our infirmities and backslidings, that we may be more watchful and more earnest for grace, for the time to come; that the adversary of our

souls may never find us off our guard, or from under thy protection!—WILSON.

And he left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. O Jesus, great fountain of all goodness! Who didst drink of the bitter cup which my sins had mingled! I am sensible there was no sorrow like unto thy sorrow, which was done unto thee, and wherewith the Lord afflicted thee in the day of his fierce anger. How was thy spirit disturbed! How sore amazed was thy soul! How dismayed thy mind! To such an exceeding height of grief and sorrow did the sense of the incumbent load of my sins, and the prospect of calamities hanging over my head, together with reflection on my unhappy condition, wind up thy affections. Innumerable evils encompassed thee; thou sawest the wrath of God flaming out against my sin, and tremblest! Thou stoodest before the mouth of hell which I had deserved, and wast astonished. Thou with thine own heart's blood didst quench the wrath of heaven. How am I obliged to adore thy love, O everlasting Father! What charity was it not to spare thine own Son, but to deliver him up for us all! What pity and compassion was it, O thou eternal Son of God, thus to pour forth thy blood! What affection, what tenderness to my soul, O thou eternal Spirit, hast thou expressed in inspiring my blessed Redeemer with charity more than human, and in supporting him to undergo all pres-

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 47—56.

suers with inimitable patience!—If I forget thy love, blessed Jesus, let my right hand forget her cunning.—What an encouragement is here to believe thy word, which I see so punctually accomplished! The ancient prophets foretold that Christ should suffer, and so it came to pass. Let me for ever believe thy promises. In all dangers, in all troubles, in all necessities, let thy promises be for my comfort. Let me never mistrust thy goodness, O heavenly Father, after so great an instance of it as the gift of thy Son must be. How can I despair of mercy upon unfeigned repentance, when, in this passion, mercy was drawn out to that length on purpose that it might reach the greatest sinners! O Jesus! thou hast defeated all mine enemies. Thou hast overthrown all obstacles to my salvation. Let me pretend and plead excuses no more. Now let me run with patience the race which is set before me. The way being opened into the holy of holies, encourage me to walk in it, with all that wait for the salvation of God. Affect my heart with religious fear, and let thy humble passion kill my pride. Let my sins appear more dreadful to me when I contemplate thine agonies; and let the world with all its deceitful vanities become loathsome to me when I see how little thou didst regard it. Let every thing die in me that is not agreeable to thy life; that when thou, who art my life, shalt appear, I may also appear with thee in glory. Amen. Amen.—HORNECK.

HYMN.

“ My Father!” thus the Saviour cried
While horrors pressed on every side,
And prostrate on the ground he lay,—
“ Remove this bitter cup away.
“ But if these pangs must still be borne,
“ Or helpless man be left forlorn,
“ I bow my soul before thy throne
“ And say, Thy will, not mine be done.”

Thus our submissive souls would bow,
And, taught by Jesus, lie as low;
Our hearts, and not our lips alone,
Would say Thy will, not ours be done!

Then though, like Him, in dust we lie,
We'll view the blissful moment nigh,
That from our portion in the pains,
Calls to the joy in which he reigns.

DODDRIEDGE.

§ LXXXV.

CHAP. XXVI. 47—56.

Christ is betrayed with a kiss.

47 ¶ And 'while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; ' and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, 'Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 47—56.

laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

51 And, behold, 'one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place; "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, 'that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the 'scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then 'all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

g Mark xiv. 48. Luke xxii. 47. John xviii. 2. Acts i. 16.—r 2 Sam. xx. 9.—s Ps. xli. 9; & lv. 18.—t John xviii. 10.—u Gen. ix. 6. Rev. xiii. 10.—w 2 Kings vi. 17. Dan. vii. 10.—y Is. liiii. 7, &c. ver. 24. Luke xxiv. 28, 44, 46.—z Lam. iv. 20. ver. 64.—a See John xviii. 15.

READER. *And while he yet spake, lo, Judas one of the twelve came, &c.*

What shall we think of Judas who betrayed him? of the officers who apprehended him? of the chief priests and elders who accused him? what shall we think of the rabble who preferred a murderer before him, and cried out Crucify him, crucify him! What shall we think of Pilate who pronounced sentence upon him? And of the soldiers who put a crown of thorns upon his head, who stripped him, who mocked him, who spit upon him, who smote him upon the head, who fastened his blessed hands and feet unto the cross with nails driven through them? What shall we think, I say, of these? These certainly are far more odious to all good Christians than we can think them to be. Or rather, with what patience are we able to think of them at all? O generation of vipers! Who could ever have imagined that men, created after the image of God, could have had such venom and poison, such rancour and malice, so much of the spirit of the devil in them, as to sell their Redeemer, accuse their advocate, condemn their judge, destroy their Saviour, kill him that gave them life, and so do all the mischief they could do to him who did all the good that could be done for them?

But we must not spend all our wrath and fury upon them, but remember that we ourselves had also a hand in that horrid act. They indeed were the instruments; but the sins of men, and ours among the rest, were the principal causes of it: the consideration whereof is

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 47—56.

enough, one would think, to make us out of love with sin as long as we live, and to hate it with a perfect hatred, and ourselves also for the commission of it. Which that we may do, let us search into our hearts, review our lives, and bethink ourselves what sins we have committed against the eternal God; and remember these men, they which put our Saviour to so much grief and pain. These are they for which the Son of God was betrayed, apprehended, derided, accused, arraigned, condemned, and crucified.—BEVERIDGE.

Forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail master! and kissed him.—And have we never thus betrayed him, even with a false and counterfeit devotion? Have we not too often pretended God's glory, when we have sought our own? And seemed to be zealous for religion, when it was only our own private interest we aimed at? Have we not professed love to the holy Jesus when at the same time we have most basely affronted him? Have we not drawn nigh unto him with our lips, when in conversation we have denied him? Have we not sometimes told him that we repented, when we have been loath to part with our darling bosom sin? Have we not sometimes kneeled under his cross, to express our veneration to him, when, in good truth, we have conspired against him with his enemies? Have we not maintained a league with sin, while we have pretended, by bowing to the Son of God, that that league was

broken and dissolved? What perfidiousness, what treachery, what dissimulation, have we been guilty of? Can we think of it, and not be concerned?—HORNECK.

And Jesus said, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.—Let us ponder and weigh the cause of his death, that thereby we may be the more moved to glorify him in our whole life. Which if you will briefly comprehend in one word, it was nothing else on our part but only the transgression and sin of mankind. When the angel came to warn Joseph that he should not fear to take Mary to his wife, did he not therefore will the child's name to be called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins? When John the Baptist preached Christ and shewed him to the people with his finger, did he not plainly say unto them, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world? When the woman of Canaan besought Christ to help her daughter which was possessed with a devil, did he not openly confess that he was sent to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, by giving his life for their sins? It was sin, then, O man, even thy sin, that caused Christ, the only Son of God, to be crucified in the flesh, and to suffer the most vile and slanderous death of the cross. If thou hadst kept thyself upright, if thou hadst observed the commandments, if thou hadst not presumed to transgress the will of God in thy first father Adam, then

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 47—56.

Christ, being in form of God, needed not to have taken upon him the shape of a servant; being immortal in heaven, he needed not to have become mortal on earth; being the true bread of the soul, he needed not to hunger; being the healthful water of life, he needed not to thirst; being life itself, he needed not to have suffered death. But to these and many other such extremities was he driven by thy sin, which was so manifold and great, that God could be only pleased in him and none other.—HOMILY OF THE PASSION.

And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, &c. What preposterous means and ways do men make use of to effect their deliverance! These poor men hope to do wonders by smiting with the sword; a way neither warranted by any command of God, nor profitable. So the Jews, in the time of Jeremiah, thought that there was no way for them to escape but by fleeing into the land of Egypt.—And have not Christians very often, out of mistrust of God's Providence, made use of wrong means to compass their safety?—But what comfort can we take in deliverance compassed by sin? Or what satisfaction in a rescue effected by the devil's means, or, at least, by doing things acceptable to him?—HORNECK.

But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?—Who can consider the grievous debt of sin, which could none otherwise be paid but by the death of an innocent, and will not hate sin in his heart?

If God hateth sin so much, that he would allow neither man nor angel for the redemption thereof, but only the death of his only and well-beloved Son, who will not stand in fear thereof? If we consider this, that for our sins the most innocent lamb was driven to death, we shall have much more cause to bewail ourselves that we were the cause of his death, than to cry out against the malice and cruelty of the Jews, which pursued him to his death. We did the deeds for which he was thus stricken and wounded; they were only the ministers of our wickedness. It is meet then that we should step low down into our hearts, and bewail our own wretchedness and sinful living. Let us know for a certainty, that if the most dearly beloved Son of God was thus punished and stricken for sins which he had not done himself,—how much more ought we to be stricken for our daily and manifold sins which we commit against God, if we earnestly repent us not, and be not sorry for them? No man can love sin, which God hateth so much, and be in his favour. No man can say that he loveth Christ truly, and have his great enemy (sin, I mean, the author of his death) familiar, and in friendship with him. So much do we love God and Christ as we hate sin. We ought therefore to take great heed that we be not favourers thereof, lest we be found enemies to God, and traitors to Christ. For not only they which nailed Christ upon the cross are his tormentors and crucifiers, but all

they, saith St. Paul, crucify again the Son of God, as much as in them, who commit vice and sin, which brought him to his death. If the wages of sin be death, and death everlasting, surely it is no small danger to be in service thereof. If we live after the flesh, and after the sinful lusts thereof, St. Paul threateneth, yea, Almighty God in St. Paul threateneth, that we shall surely die. We can none otherwise live unto God but by dying unto sin. If Christ be in us, then is sin dead in us: and if the Spirit of God be in us, which raised Christ from death to life, so shall the same Spirit raise us to the resurrection of everlasting life. But if sin rule and reign in us, then is God, which is the fountain of all grace and virtue, departed from us; then hath the devil and his ungracious spirit rule and dominion in us. And surely, if in such miserable state we die, we shall not rise to life, but fall down to death and condemnation, and that without end. For Christ hath not so redeemed us from sin, that we may return thereto again; but he hath redeemed us, that we should forsake the motions thereof, and live to righteousness."—HOMILY OF THE PASSION.

HYMN.

By thy birth and early years,
By thy griefs, and sighs and tears;
By thy fasting and distress
In the lonely wilderness;
By thy vict'ries in the hour
Of the subtle tempter's power;
Jesus, look with pitying eye,
Hear and spare us when we cry.

358

By thy woe intensely great,
Agony, and bloody sweat;
By thy robe and crown of scorn.
Rudely offer'd, meekly worn;
By the scandal and the shame
Cast upon thy honour'd name;
Jesus look with pitying eye,
Hear and spare us when we cry.

By thy passion, cross, and cries;
By thy perfect sacrifice;
By thy power from death to save;
By thy triumph o'er the grave;
Jesus, Saviour of the lost,
Giver of the Holy Ghost;
Look on us with pitying eye,
Hear and spare us when we cry.

GRANT.

§ LXXXVI.

CHAP. XXVI. 57—64.

Christ is carried to Caiphas.

57 ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

61 And said, This *fellow* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 'And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

63 But ⁶ Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man ⁷ sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

⁶ Mark xiv. 59. Luke xxi. 54. John xviii. 12, 13, 24. —^c Ps. xxvii. 12; & xxxv. 11. Mark xiv. 59. So Acts vi. 13.—^d Deut. xix. 15.—^e ch. xxvii. 40. John ii. 19.—^f Mark xiv. 60.—^g Is. liii. 7. ch. xxvii. 12, 14.—^h Lev. v. 1. 1 Sam. xiv. 24, 28.—ⁱ Dan. vii. 13. ch. xvi. 27; & xxiv. 30. Luke xxi. 27; & xxv. 31. John i. 51. Rom. xiv. 10. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Rev. i. 7.—^k Ps. cx. 1. Acts vii. 55.

READER. *And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away, &c.* When you hear how our blessed Lord was betrayed, and used, and crucified by the merciless Jews, you are naturally led to wonder, and to blame that people's malice, their wickedness, and injustice. For example; we are moved with indignation when we are informed that one of his disciples, who had been with him for so long a time, had seen his miracles and heard his blessed discourses, could be tempted to betray him for any consideration whatever;

—that so great a number of men of learning and supposed piety should meet and contrive how to take away the life of an innocent person,—to encourage false witnesses,—and to persuade the people to pray for the life of a murderer, instead of the life of one who had done so much good among them;—then we are led to blame his judge, who had declared over and over again, that he found no fault in him, and yet at last condemned him; and, lastly, we are amazed that any people could be so cruelly barbarous as to mock a man, and use him so spitefully, who had never done them harm, and at a time when his life was at stake, or when he was suffering a most painful death. These thoughts are, perhaps, much in our minds when we read the mournful account of our Saviour's sufferings.

After all, this was not the great design of leaving these things upon record: but to let us see what treatment our sins deserve; how abominable sin is in the sight of an holy and just God, who suffered his own Son to be thus treated when he had put himself in the place of sinners, in order to procure their pardon;—and, lastly, to convince sinners what they must expect, whose sins are not pardoned by the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ.—WILSON.

But Peter followed him afar off unto the high-priest's palace.—Peter follows afar off, loath to run himself into danger. Such has been, too often, our following of Christ; cowardly, afar off, trembling, with fear and pusillanimity. If Christ deserves

not our venturing all, even life itself, why do we profess ourselves Christians? He that has promised to give us everlasting life, does not he deserve the voluntary loss of our temporal life? Oh how have we been afraid, when our conscientiousness hath drawn us into any inconvenience! How afraid have we been of doing things he hath commanded, when they have seemed to be prejudicial to our interests! So far as we could safely profess and practise the rules of godliness, so far we have ventured; but when any trouble hath been likely to arise upon the account of that goodness, O how have we drawn back, or served God by halves, and with reserves! O let us be ashamed of our cowardice, and take care that no man take our crown!—HORNÆCK.

Now the chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death but found none.—Whosoever thou art who makest a noise about the injustice of what thou sufferest, and thinkest to justify thine impatience by thine innocence, let me ask thee, Art thou more just and innocent than he who is here set before thee? Or art thou able to come near him in this point?—All Christ's words as well as his actions, and all his thoughts, flowed from a pure spring that had not any thing defiled in it; and therefore no temptation, either from men or Satan, could seize on him. Other men may seem clear, as long as they are unstirred; but move or trouble them, and the mud arises; but he was nothing but holi-

ness, a pure fountain, all purity to the bottom; and therefore stir and trouble him as they could, he was still alike clear. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John xiv. 30.)

This is the main ground of our confidence in him, that he is a "holy, harmless, undefiled High-Priest:" and "such a one became us," says the Apostle, who are so sinful, Heb. vii. 26. The more sinful we are, the more need that our high priest should be sinless; and being so, we may build upon his perfection, as standing in our stead; yea, we are invested with him and his righteousness.—LEIGHTON.

What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace.—"The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all," saith the Prophet; Isa. liii. 6.—Took it off from us, and charged it on him, "made it to meet on him," or to fall in together, as the word in the original imports. The sins of all, in all ages before and after, who were to be saved, all their guiltiness met together on his back upon the cross. Whosoever of all that number had least sin, yet had no small burden to cast on him: and to give accession to the whole weight, "every man hath had his own way of wandering" as the prophet there expresseth it, and he paid for all; all fell on him. And as in testimony of his meekness and patience, so in this respect likewise, was he so silent in his sufferings, that though his enemies dealt most unjustly with him, yet he stood as convicted be-

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 57—64.

fore the justice-seat of his father, under the imputed guilt of all our sins, and so eyeing him, and accounting his business to be chiefly with him, he did patiently bear the due punishment of all our sins at his father's hand, according to that of the Psalmist, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it." Ps. xxxix. 9. And therefore the prophet immediately subjoins the description of his silent behaviour to that which he had spoken of the confluence of our iniquities upon him: "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isa. liii. 7.—LEIGHTON.

Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God? Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said. What a strange mystery the work of man's redemption is, that God himself should become man! That he that was perfect God, like unto the Father in every thing, his personal properties only excepted, should also be perfect man, like unto us in all things, our personal infirmities only excepted; that he that made the world should be himself made in it; that eternity should stoop to time, glory be wrapt in misery, and the sun of righteousness hid under a cloud of earth; that innocence should be betrayed, justice condemned, and life itself should die, and all to redeem man from death to life. Oh wonder of wonders! How justly may we say with the Apostle, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness!" 1 Tim. iii. 16.

He, by his life and death, merited so much for us, because the same

person, that so lived and died, was God as well as man; and every action that he did, and every passion that he suffered, was done and suffered by him that was God as well as man. And hence it is that Christ of all the persons in the world, is so fit, yea only fit, to be my Redeemer, mediator, and surety, because he alone is both God and man in one person. If he was not man, he could not undertake that office; if he was not God, he could not perform it: if he was not man, he could not be capable of being bound for me; if he was not God, he could not be able to pay my debt.—BEVERIDGE.

Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.—We have a telescope through which we can behold the glorious appearance of the supreme judge; the solemn state of his majestic person; the splendid pomp of his magnificent and vastly numerous retinue; the obsequious throng of glorious celestial creatures, doing homage to their eternal king; the swift flight of his royal guards, sent forth into the four winds to gather the elect, and covering the face of the heavens with their spreading wings; the universal silent attention of all to that loud sounding trumpet that shakes the pillars of the world, pierces the inward caverns of the earth, and resounds from every part of the encircling heavens; the many myriads of joyful expectants arising, changing, putting on glory, taking wing, and mounting upwards, to

join themselves to the triumphant heavenly host; the judgment set, the books opened, the frightful and amazed looks of surprised wretches; the equal administration of the final judgment; the adjudication of all to their eternal states; the heavens rolled up as a scroll; the earth and all things therein consumed and burnt up.—Howe.

HYMN.

Thou who for me didst feel such pain,
Whose precious blood the cross did stain,
Let not those agonies be vain!
Thou whom avenging powers obey
Cancel my debt (too great to pay)
Before the last accounting day!

Thou who wast moved with Mary's grief,
And by absolving of the thief
Hast given me hope, now give relief!
Reject not my unworthy prayer,
Preserve me from that fatal snare
Which death and endless hell prepare.

From that insatiable abyss
Where flames devour, where Satan is,
Oh! save and bring me to thy bliss.
Give to my ransomed soul a place
Among thy chosen right-hand race
The sons of God, and heirs of grace.

ROSCOMON.

§ LXXXVII.

CHAP. XXVI. 65—75.

Christ condemned to death; and denied by Peter.

65 'Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

362

66 What think ye? They answered and said, "He is guilty of death.

67 "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, 'Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

69 ¶ 'Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fel- low* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy 'speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then 'began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, 'Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice,

And he went out, and wept bitterly.

12 Kln. xviii. 37; & xix. 1.—m Lev. xxiv. 16. John xix. 7.—n Is. 1. 6; & lili. 3. ch. xxvii. 30.—o Luke xxii. 63. John xix. 3.—p Or, rods.—q Mark xiv. 65. Luke xxii. 64.—r Mark xiv. 66. Luke xxii. 65. John xviii. 16, 17, 23.—s Luke xxii. 69.—t Mark xiv. 71.—u ver. 34. Mark xiv. 30. Luke xxii. 61, 62. John xiii. 38.

READER. *Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy.* Reproaches are often mentioned amongst and beyond other trials, and accounted persecution. See Mat. v. 10, 11. In the history of the casting out of Hagar and her son, Gen. xxi. 9, all we find laid to Ishmael's charge is "Sarah saw him mocking." And as "he that was born after the flesh," did then, in this manner, "persecute him that was born after the spirit," even so it is now. Gal. iv. 29. And thus are reproaches mentioned amongst the sufferings of Christ in the Gospel, and not as the least; the railings and mockings that were darted at him, are mentioned more than the very nails that fixed him. And so Heb. xii. 2, "the shame" of the cross: though he were above it, and despised it, yet that "shame" added much to the burden of it." Consider him who endured the contradiction of sinners.

Now this is the lot of Christians, as it was of Christ. And why should they look for more kindness and better usage, and think to find acclamations and applauses from the world which so vilified their Lord? Oh no! The vain heart must be weaned from these, to follow Christ. If we will indeed follow him, it must be tamed to share with him in this point of suf-

fering, not only mistakes and misconstructions, but bitter scoffings and reproaches. Why should not our minds ply and fold to this upon that very reason which he so reasonably presses again and again on his disciples? "The servant is not greater than his master." And, in reference to this very thing he adds, "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Mat. xx. 24, 25.—

LEIGHTON.

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee? What dreadful sins doth brutish ignorance lead men to commit! Sins that, were their eyes open, would affright them! Had these wretches known who it was they abused thus, it would have precipitated them into the gulf of sorrow and despair! O my soul, how is it thou dost not tremble to think of the sins thou didst commit in thy ignorance? How didst thou laugh at sins which have made other good men weep rivers of tears! How bold hast thou been in thy affronts of the Divine Majesty! Affronts, at the thoughts of which some saints have fainted, and yet thou canst think of them at this time without indignation! Thou wouldst indeed, it is likely, commit them no more; but how should the very remembrance of them strike terror into thy mind, and make thee wish for fountains of water to bewail them!—HORNECK.

He denied before them all—And again he denied with an oath—Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.

Here we have a sad instance of human frailty, when left to itself. St. Peter had declared, over and over again, that he would lay down his life for his master; but when he saw his master in this danger, and was charged with being one of his disciples, he denied it after a manner the most weak and scandalous; which was, no doubt, a great addition to our Lord's affliction. This ought to be a warning to the best of us, not to trust in ourselves, without the grace and help of God, which we ought never to forget to pray for.

We have in us the seeds of all manner of wickedness, ready to spring up, and break out into sinful actions upon the first occasion, if not restrained by the grace of God. We are all of the same race and make with St. Peter, who denied his Lord and Saviour—with Judas, who betrayed him,—with Pilate who condemned him against his conscience,—with the Jews who crucified him,—with Herod who murdered the innocent children,—with the men of Sodom, whose sin was punished with fire and brimstone,—and with those of the old world who brought upon themselves an universal destruction. Though the corruption of our nature has not discovered itself in such wickedness as these, yet we have the root and seed of all these, and all other, sins in us; and we ought to know this,

and to know that on this account we are utterly unfit for the favour of God, and should certainly feel his everlasting displeasure, but that Jesus Christ has purchased our redemption by his most precious blood, and has put us into a way of regaining the favour of God, and of attaining everlasting salvation, if we are not wanting to ourselves. It is absolutely necessary that we should know and feel our miserable estate and condition, to the end that, seeing our misery, we may more earnestly look out for help, and embrace it when offered to us.

St. Peter had, perhaps, as much natural courage as most men, as appears by his behaviour in the garden; and he had positively given his Master his word, 'If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise';—and yet within twelve hours after, he swears that he knows him not! What account can be given of this? Why, this was the cause of such a strange alteration in the Apostle,—He trusted to his own strength, and God for that time left him to himself, and you see what followed. And so it will ever be when God, for our sins, leaves us to ourselves. There is not the vilest thing we now abhor, nor the basest vice which we may not be guilty of, if ever the Spirit of God gives us up to the government of our own wills.—WILSON.

And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.—

ST. MATTHEW XXVII. 1—10.

St. Luke adds, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." Our Lord had pity on him, otherwise he might have gone the length of Judas' sin: the cock had spoken to his outward ears without any effect, till Jesus, with a most gracious and powerful look, touched his heart with a true sense of his crime, and melted it into tears of repentance.—May the same eye of mercy look upon us whenever we shall do amiss, that we may be sensible of our fault, and return out of the way of ruin!—WILSON.

HYMN.

Jesus, and can it ever be
A mortal man ashamed of thee?
Ashamed of thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days!

Asham'd of Jesus! that dear friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No: when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere his name.

Asham'd of Jesus!—Yes I may
When I've no guilt to wash away,
No tear to wipe, no good to crave,
No fears to quell, no soul to save.

Till then,—nor is the boasting vain—
Till then I boast a Saviour slain;
And oh, may this my portion be,
That Saviour not asham'd of me!

GRIGG.

§ LXXXVIII.

CHAP. XXVII. 1—10.

*Christ is delivered bound to Pilate.
Judas hangeth himself.*

WHEN the morning was come,
' all the chief priests and elders

of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 ¶ Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, ' The field of blood unto this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, ' And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valu-

ed, "whom they of the children of Israel did value ;

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

a Ps. li. 2. Mark xv. 1. Luke xxii. 66 ; & xxiii. 1. John xviii. 28.—b ch xx. 19. Acts iii. 18.—c ch xxvi 14, 15.—d 2 Sam. xvii. 23 Acts i. 18.—e Acts i 19.—f Zech. xi. 12, 13.—|| Or, whom they bought of the children of Israel.

Reader.—The Roman governors of Judea usually resided at Cæsarea ; but they repaired to the capital on the great festivals. Pontius Pilate was at Jerusalem, at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, in accordance with this custom.

The words "Judas—repented himself" mean that this treacherous disciple "was struck with remorse." Repentance unto life is very different from that remorse, the sting of a guilty conscience, which drives a man to despair.

The confession of the traitor, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" forms one remarkable attestation to the perfect purity and unblameable conduct of our blessed Lord. Even one who was most familiar with his life and actions could not find any fault with which he could honestly charge him, when he was abundantly willing and desirous to accuse him !

The words in ver. 9, 10, from "Jeremy the prophet" are found in Zechariah xi. 13. The manner of making the quotation, although it may appear strange to us, is nevertheless, says Dr. Lightfoot, perfectly correct ; the word Jeremiah standing at the head of that division of

the Hebrew Scriptures from which the Evangelist quoted, and giving its denomination to the whole of that collection of prophetic writings. It was an ancient custom among the Jews to divide the Old Testament into three parts, the first of which, beginning with the Law, was called the Law,—the second, beginning with the Psalms, was called the Psalms,—and the third, beginning with Jeremiah, was entitled Jeremiah. So that from the writings of Zechariah, and other prophets which were included in the third division, quotations would be made as from "Jeremiah."

READER.—*All the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.*—It appears strange to us, at first sight, that the Jews, who had in their hands the many prophecies of the Messiah, who expected and prayed for his coming, should yet so violently oppose him when he appeared among them. And yet this is very easily accounted for. Their hearts and affections were much set upon this world ; they expected, and they hoped for, such a Redeemer as would fight their battles, overcome their enemies who kept them under, and set them above all the nations of the earth. Now, it was plainly impossible that people under such prejudices and expectations as these should generally receive our Saviour in the mean and humble circumstances in which he appeared. He

ST. MATTHEW XXVII. 1—10.

owned and declared that his kingdom was not of this world; that his followers must expect no earthly power, or preferment, from him. And his appearance was accordingly. He affected no grandeur; he refused the very honours that were offered him; and all his discourses to those poor people with whom he, for the most part, conversed, were concerning a world to come, and how they might fit themselves for future happiness.

It is true there were people who received this doctrine, and him that brought it. But who were they? Such only whose affections were not too much set upon the things of this life; such as were convinced that this is not the world they were made for; such as were sensible of, and mourned for, their sins and infirmities; the humble and meek in spirit; the pure in heart; all such as desired to know and to do the will of God. To all these the appearance and the doctrines of Jesus Christ were very reasonable and acceptable; to all others he was a stumbling-block and an offence.—WILSON.

What is that to us? See thou to that!—Here one cannot omit to observe, how little those that tempt others to wickedness are concerned for what follows! Judas, his eyes being opened, was overwhelmed with horror at what he had done; and flung back the money they had given him, declaring that he had betrayed the innocent blood. This mournful confession, and sad affliction, never moved them. All they

answered was, See thou to that!

You wonder that a man should be so foolish as for such a wretched sum to commit so great a crime. This shews us plainly how sin blinds the eyes of our minds. It is not Judas only that makes these mad bargains; every man that sells his soul for gain or pleasure is as mad and blind as he was; and when they come to die will be convinced of it, as effectually as Judas was before he died, who then found his master's words true to his cost, What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? —WILSON.

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.—It was not one sin that ruined Judas; men do not fill up the measure of their iniquities all at once. It was observed of him, before the account of his treachery, that he was covetous; and that, being trusted with the money which Christ and his Apostles had to live on, he converted part of this unfaithfully to his own private use. St. John therefore says he was a thief. Now from this we may learn how dangerous it is to continue in any known sin; we cannot foresee what it will end in. If the love of money made Judas first a thief, and then a traitor, why should any man else think himself safe, when he has once provoked God to leave him to himself?

And here it will be proper to observe to you, that men are not so much their own masters as they are apt to think. Governed we must be, either by the Spirit of God, or by

ST. MATTHEW XXVII. 11—23.

an evil spirit. Whenever men provoke God to withdraw his protection, that moment the devil takes them under his power, and, as the Scripture says, "leads them captive at his will." It was thus with Judas; for after the eating of the sop, we are told, the devil entered into him, and forced him immediately to go about his desperate undertaking. This shews the danger of resisting the Spirit of God, of despising the day of grace; and the folly of resolving to repent some day or other, as if we were our own masters, and could always do what is fit to be done, as if we could resist temptation when we pleased, as if we could foresee our ruin and were of ourselves able to prevent it. Was it so with Judas? You see it was not. You see him when once God had forsaken him, hurried by his new master to his ruin!—WILSON.

Whilst we persist in any wilful course of sin, we do not only violate our own conscience, but also repel those good motions of the Spirit of God whereby he strives to reduce and reclaim us; in doing which we continually grieve him, and if we do not forbear, shall at length provoke him wholly to forsake and abandon us, to give us up to our own hearts' lusts as desperate wretches with whom he hath hitherto struggled in vain, and of whose future recovery there remains no further hope nor prospect. And when he hath forsaken us, our mind will not only be left naked and destitute of all those helps and advantages for the understanding of Divine truths, which it

receives from him, but also be exposed to the cheats and fallacies of evil spirits. For so the Apostle tells us of Antichrist, the great deceiver, that he should come "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to them that perish, because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved."—By persisting in any vicious course against the light and conviction of our conscience, we highly provoke Almighty God to withdraw his grace from us, and to give us up to our own heart's lust.—J. SCOTT.

HYMN.

Great King of glory and of grace!
We own with humble shame,
How vile is our degenerate race
And our first father's name.

We live estrang'd afar from God,
And love the distance well;
In haste we run the dang'rous road,
That leads to death and hell.

And can such rebels be restor'd?
Such natures made divine?
Let sinners see thy glory, Lord,
And feel this power of thine!

We raise our Father's name on high,
Who his own Spirit sends
To bring rebellious strangers nigh,
And turn his foes to friends.

WATTS.

§ LXXXIX.

CHAP. XXVII. 11—23.

Christ stands before the governor. Pilate, admonished of his wife, washeth his hands, and looseth Barabbas.

11 And Jesus stood before the governor: "and the gover-

nor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, [^]Thou sayest.

12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, [^]he answered nothing.

13 Then said Pilate unto him, [^]Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15 [^]Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 [^]But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask

Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, Let him be crucified.

g Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3. John xviii. 33. A John xviii. 37. 1 Tim. vi. 13. f ch. xxvi. 63. John xix. 9. A ch. xxvi. 62. John xix. 10. f Mark xv. 6. Luke xxiii. 17. John xviii. 39. m Mark xv. 11. Luke xxii. 18. John xviii. 40. Acts iii. 14.

READER. *The governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.*

—Christ is a king, by many unquestionable titles, of a great and extensive authority, exercising it to the best effects and purposes. He is a king by nature and birth; as the only Son of God, partaker of His eternal power and majesty; for therefore to Him it was said, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre;” and as the Son of David; for of him the Angel said, “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne, of David his father, and he shall reign over the house of David for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” He is also a king by Divine designation and appointment, for “let all the house of Israel (saith St. Peter) know as-

surely, that God hath made him Lord and Christ;" and "The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the son of man," (or as such). He is also king by merit and purchase; for "He for the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honour; He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross; therefore God super-exalted him, and bestowed on him a name above every name. To this end he both died and rose again, that he might lord it over both the dead and the living." He is king also by conquest; having delivered us out of the power of darkness, and freed us from the vassalage of sin; "having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly," and triumphed over them; having "delivered us from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; that we being delivered from our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." He is also a king by our election and free choice, we having voluntarily put ourselves under his protection, and submitted to his command, and taken upon ourselves his yoke, and vowed everlasting fealty to Him in our Baptism. Such a right he hath of governing.

As for the extent of his kingdom, it is in all respects boundless, both for place and time; it is universal and perpetual. He is the eternal king of all the world: God hath so exalted him and given him a name above all names, That to the

name of Jesus every knee should bend, whether of things in Heaven or things upon earth, or things under the earth. To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, by every creature in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth are jointly to be ascribed, the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the power for ever and for ever. He is constituted "above all rule and authority and domination, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come:" it is his just title and proper badge, "the King of kings and Lord of lords;" to whom all nations are vassals, yea, all creatures are subject and tributary. But he in especial manner is king over his church; that peculiar people, whom he hath especially purchased to himself by his merits and blood; whom he hath subdued to his obedience by the sword of his Word, and by the prevailing virtue of his Spirit; that mystical Sion, in which it is said that God will place his reign and residence for ever; that heavenly city, where all the saints are fellow-citizens, and he the sovereign Head and Governor; "God hath (saith St. Paul) put all things under his feet, and hath given him head above all things to the church." In respect to which both the evangelical dispensation here, and the future state of bliss hereafter, are called the "kingdom of heaven." Over this he reigns, enjoying all royal prerogatives, exercising all royal administrations, and dispensing most royal

munificences. He hath in this his kingdom established most righteous and wholesome laws; the which his subjects are by him obliged and enabled to obey. He constantly defendeth, and protecteth his subjects from all invasions and assaults of their enemies (intestine enemies, their own lusts; external enemies, the devil and the world). He provides for all their needs and wants; he supporteth them in all their distresses and troubles. He exercises judgment over them; distributing fit rewards and punishments with exquisite justice and equity (most liberal rewards to the loyal and obedient; most severe punishments, upon obstinate offenders and rebels.) He, lastly, restrains and suppresses, defeats, and destroys all the adversaries to his royal dignity, and to the welfare of his good subjects, both visible and invisible, temporal and spiritual. "Out of his mouth (as it is in the Apocalypse) there goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." "These mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me." "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Thus is he a King, endued with sovereign right and power; crowned with glorious majesty: enjoying all preeminence and exercising all acts suitable to regal dignity.—BARROW.

Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto them a prisoner, whom they would. When the Paschal Lamb was to be killed, the

Jews had a prisoner released to them to confirm the memory of their deliverance from the house of bondage. O Lamb of God! when thou diedst, thou didst open the prison door, for all mankind to come out,—thou didst proclaim liberty to all men, captivated by sin and the devil! Wonderful release! Well may we wonder how men, after this liberty procured for them by his death, should yet be fond of their prison still, and delight in slavery and the bondage of iniquity. O Lord, "bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name!"—HORNECK.

Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said Barabas. A monstrous choice! To prefer a man before God, a son of death before the Lord of life, a malefactor before innocence itself, a murderer before the Saviour of the world, darkness before light, a villain before the Son of God! Yet, blessed Jesus, such a sad choice have we made too often, when we have preferred the cares of the world before the better part. And while we have condemned these wicked men, and been in a kind of passion to see and hear of their impiety, we have unawares sunk into this sin ourselves, by preferring a trifle before thy will, and a foolish satisfaction before rest in thy bosom, and an interest in thy favour; and the things of this world before a more glorious reversion in another life. Pardon our desperate choice! And may we henceforward prefer thee, who art fairer than the children of men,

ST. MATTHEW XXVII. 24—32.

before all that the flesh may promise or the world can give! One thing is needful, even thy love of complacency; and if we have that, it shall not be taken away from us.—**HORNECK.**

And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

—O Jesus! It is very true, thou hadst done no evil neither was guile found in thy mouth; when thou wast reviled, thou didst not revile again; when thou sufferedst, thou threatenedst not; thou wentest about doing good; no man could convince thee of any sin; thou wast good and didst good, even to those that now cried Crucify him! Thou camest to discourage men from evil; it was thy province to destroy the works of the devil, and to make men partakers of the divine nature. Goodness was in thy nature, and all thy actions breathed of it: thou wast tender of men's good, of the good of their souls and bodies! Oh make us conformable to thy goodness! May we abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good. May thy goodness be our pattern, and in that goodness may we evermore rejoice. Make us steadily and invincibly good; good unto death, that we may receive the crown of life! Thy goodness endures for ever; give ours the same duration! Oh touch our souls with thy light, and they shall burn bright for ever!—**HORNECK.**

HYMN.

Come, ye that love the Saviour's name,
And joy to make it known;

372

The sov'reign of your heart proclaim,
And bow before his throne.

Behold your king, your Saviour crown'd
With glories all divine;
And tell the wond'ring nations 'round
How bright those glories shine.

Infinite power and boundless grace
In him unite their rays;
You that have e'er beheld his face
Can you forbear his praise?

While in his earthly courts we view
The glories of our king,
We long to love as angels do,
And wish like them to sing.

O happy period, glorious day!
When heaven and earth shall raise,
With all their powers, the raptur'd lay
To celebrate thy praise!

STEELE.

§ XC.

CHAP. XXVII. 24—32.

Christ is mocked; and led away to be crucified.

24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

25 Then answered all the people, and said, his blood be on us, and on our children.

26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

27 'Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

28 And they stripped him, and 'put on him a scarlet robe.

29 ¶ 'And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews!

30 And 'they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

32 And 'as they came out, 'they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

^a Deut. xxi. 6. ^b Deut. xix. 10. Josh. ii. 19. 1 Kings ii. 2. 2 Sam. i. 16. Acts v. 28. ^c Is. liii. 5. Mark xv. 3. Luke xxiii. 16, 24, 26. John xix. 1, 16. ^d Mark xv. 16. John xix. 2. ^e Or, *governor's house*. ^f Luke xxiii. 11. ^g Psalm lxxix. 19. ^h Is. liii. 3. ⁱ Is. i. 6. ch. xxvi. 67. ^j Is. lii. 7. ^k Num. xv. 26. 1 Kings xxi. 18. Acts vii. 26. Heb. xiii. 12. ^l Mark xv. 21. Luke xxiii. 26.

READER. *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, &c.*—The chief priests and elders still persisted in their demand to have Jesus crucified, and told the judge that he was not the emperor's friend, if he released the prisoner. This awakened his fears; and, after having washed his

hands, and declared that he was innocent of the blood of that just person, he condemned him to be crucified,—against all justice, against all law, and against his conscience. When he declared himself innocent of Christ's blood, the Jews cried out, His blood be on us and on our children;—and so it is to this day. For though it were for our sins his blood was shed, yet their crime was exceeding great, as it appeared by the punishment it brought upon them, in the destruction of their temple, their city, their nation, and themselves.—His righteous blood was required of them in a most signal and dreadful manner, within forty years after they so unjustly crucified the Son of God; and at the very time of the Passover; when their city was besieged, and no less than eleven hundred thousand were slain at one time. And Pilate, the unrighteous judge, who had both acquitted and condemned the Lord Christ, by a righteous judgment of God, was soon after called from his government and banished, and within four or five years hanged himself out of despair.—WILSON.

When he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.—In the wounded and mangled body of our great Master, in the anguish his soul was in, upon account of our sins, we behold what odious and monstrous things they are, how abominable to God's pure eyes, how contrary to his holiness, and what a separation they make between the Creator and the creature; how they move him to forsake us, to withdraw

his gracious presence from us; what fears, what tremblings, what shame, what ignominy, what sorrow, what grief they cause. All this is certainly to be seen in the floods of misery which fell upon our Mediator, who undertook our cause, bore our sins upon the cross, and was made sin for us, put his shoulder under our griefs and carried our sorrows, was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Having taken that tremendous burden upon himself, see how he was rejected, despised, forsaken, trampled on,—what horrors, what fears, what darkness fell upon him.—Can we see, in this great example, how God will deal with us, if we neglect the calls of grace and mercy, and yet embrace those sins which, upon our account, were so severely punished in him that was our surety, who stepped in and took the blow that would have lighted on us? All the goodness, holiness, and divinity that was in this Saviour of mankind could not make the sins he bore look lovely in the eyes of God; and, though he was the Son of God, yet, our sins being laid upon him, as they were on the sacrifice under the law, God's justice and purity would not look upon them with a favourable eye; and though he was the dearly beloved of his eternal Father, yet God punished those sins in him in a very terrible manner, to let us know that, if we accept not of the remedy which Christ offers us, if we do not make his cross a motive to conversion, they shall be thus punished in our own person,

and that to all eternity.—HORNECK.

And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe, &c.—After they had scourged him without remorse, they clothed him with purple, and crowned him with thorns, and put a cane in his hand for a sceptre, and bowed their knees before him, and saluted him with mockery, with Hail, king of the Jews! and they beat him, and spat upon him; and then Pilate brought him forth, and shewed this sad spectacle to the people. The earth, which was cursed for Adam's sake, and was sowed with thorns and thistles, produced the full harvest of them, and the second Adam gathered them all, and made garlands of them, as ensigns of his victory which he was now in pursuit of against sin, the grave, and hell.—TAYLOR.

And after that they had mocked him they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. When the sentence of death pronounced against the Lord was to be put in execution, the soldiers pulled off the robe of mockery, which in jest they had put on him, and put on his own garments. But, as Origen observes, the evangelist mentions not that they took off the crown of thorns; what might serve their own interest they pursue, but nothing of remission or mercy to the afflicted son of man. But so it became the king of sufferings, not to lay aside his imperial thorns, till they were changed into diadems of glory. Now Abel is led forth by his brother to be slain; a gay

MATTHEW XXVII. 24—32.

spectacle to satisfy impious eyes who would not stay behind, but attended and waited upon the executioner to see the catastrophe of this bloody tragedy. But when Piety looks on, she beholds a glorious mystery. Sin laughed to see the king of heaven and earth, and the great lover of souls, instead of the sceptre of his kingdom to bear a tree of cursing and shame. But Piety wept tears of pity, and knew they would melt into joy, when she should behold that cross which loaded the shoulders of her lord, afterwards sit upon the sceptres, and be engraven and signed upon the foreheads, of kings.—TAYLOR.

The best defensative against sin, at any time, is the remembrance of Christ's sufferings. This remembrance is an excellent shield in the day of battle. Art thou walking, art thou standing, art thou sitting, art thou going out or coming in? Set a bleeding Saviour before thee: when sinners entice thee, think of thy Saviour's wounds; when thou art tempted to overreach or defraud thy neighbour in any matter, think of the bitter cup thy master drank off; when any lust, any vain desire, rises in thy mind, think of thy dear Redeemer's groans; when thy flesh grows weary of a duty, think of him who suffered on the cross: when thou art tempted to be indifferent in religion, and faint in thy mind, look upon him who made his soul an offering for thy sin: when thou art loth to overcome, think of him who, by his death, overcame him that had the power of death: when

impatient thoughts assault thy mind, think of the Lamb that before his shearers was dumb; and surely, under this sad scene, thou wilt not dare to sin.—HORNBECK.

They led him away to crucify him.
O blessed Saviour! What eye can refrain from weeping, what heart from bleeding! Is this the entertainment the world gives to the dearest pledge that ever God sent it? Is this thy welcome into it? Is this thy departure out of it? Shall we mock, and buffet, and scourge, and crucify, and pierce, and murder thee; and wilt thou, by these outrages committed against thee, accomplish our salvation? O victorious love! that canst pardon, when thou art abused; that canst enliven when thou art slaughtered; that canst exalt when thou art abased; and canst bless by being thyself accursed! Christ was made a curse for us. O riches of grace, and miracle of mercy! Can you hear all the torments and woes that he sustained? "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see whether any sorrow was like unto his, wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his wrath." And therefore, neither should any thankfulness and gratitude be like to ours, who are delivered from so great a wrath by his bearing of it.

Let us go, then, and prostrate ourselves before our gracious Saviour; admire and adore that love which we can never comprehend; and yield ourselves to be swallowed up in the abyss of his Divine love, the full measure of which we

ST. MATTHEW XXVII. 33—38.

can no more conceive than we could bear the wrath from which it hath delivered us.—HOPKINS.

HYMN.

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! John xix. 5.

Behold the man! how glorious He!
Before his foes he stands unaw'd;
And, without wrong or blasphemy,
He claims equality with God.

Behold the man! by all condemned
Assaulted by a host of foes;
His person and his claims contemn'd
A man of suffering and of woes!

Behold the man! he stands alone,
His foes are ready to devour;
Not one of all his friends will own
Their Master in this trying hour,

Behold the man! so weak he seems,
His awful word inspires no fear;
But soon must he who now blasphemous
Before His judgment seat appear.

Behold the man! though scorn'd below
He bears the greatest name above;
The angels at his footstool bow
And all his royal claims approve.

§ XCI.

CHAP. XXVII. 33—38.

Christ is crucified.

33 ^a And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

34 ¶ ^a They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

35 ^b And they crucified him, and parted his garments, cast-

ing lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, ^c They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36 ^d And sitting down they watched him there;

37 And ^e set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 ^f Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

^a Mark xv. 22. Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 17. ^b Psalm lxxix. 21. See ver. 49. ^c Mark xv. 24. Luke xxiii. 34. John xix. 24. ^d Psalm xxii. 18. ^e ver. 34. ^f Mark xv. 26. Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 19. ^g Is. liii. 12. Mark xv. 27. Luke xxiii. 32, 33. John xix. 18.

READER.—*And they crucified him.*—The eternal Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, of one substance with the Father, God blessed for ever,—having taken our flesh upon him, and made it one person with himself,—in that nature was fastened to the cross, with nails driven through his hands and feet. There he hung three long hours together, not for himself, but for us and for our sins: there he “his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” 1 Pet. ii. 24. There he “redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Gal. iii. 13. There “he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his

stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii. 5, 6. There "he laid down his life for the sheep." John x. 15. There "he gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. 2, 6. There "he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. ix. 36. That was the altar upon which he, our true high priest, offered up himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world; "who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself," Heb. vii. 27, when he offered up himself upon the cross. There he "tasted death for every man," Heb. ii. 9. There the Lamb of God took away the sin of the world, John i. 29. There he was made "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 2. All this our Lord Jesus Christ did upon the cross, this he did there for us, for us his creatures, for us his servants, for us his enemies, for us vile dust and ashes. How can any of us consider this, and not cry out with the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Gal. vi. 14.

Who can express the inestimable benefits which we receive by the reconciliation which Christ there made for us! What can be desired, what can be imagined, more or greater, than to have the supreme

Governor and Dispenser of all things for our friend;—to have him reconciled to us, and well pleased with us, and always manifesting his special favour and kindness to us! In his favour is life, and health, and strength, and liberty, and all the good things we are capable of, following directly upon it. By this we are delivered from a thousand dangers, which we ourselves could never have prevented, nor so much as seen. By this we are protected from our spiritual enemy, and from all the temptations and snares that he lays for us. By this all our other enemies are at peace with us, and whatsoever their mind may be, they can have no power to hurt us. By this the holy angels minister to us, and keep us in all our ways. By this we are sure to have whatsoever we ask in the name of Christ, so far as is good for us, and no further. By this all the good works which we sincerely endeavour to do, though imperfect in themselves, yet are acceptable to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By this we are preserved from all evil, and have all things working together for our good. By this our very "afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more abundant and exceeding weight of glory." By this we have a kingdom prepared for us in heaven, where we shall perfectly behold and enjoy his love, and live with him, in "whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore." All these unspeakable blessings we have, or may have, by the favour of

Almighty God, through the merits of that most precious death, which our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to suffer upon the cross. In short, it is to that we are beholden for all the good things that we either have or hope for at the hands of God.—**BEVERIDGE.**

And sitting down they watched him there.—Let us now, for a few minutes, suppose ourselves at the foot of the cross, and Jesus Christ speaking to us, after this manner,—‘It is for you, and on your account, that I undergo these pains and these indignities,—to make an atonement for your sins ;—to obtain your pardon, that you may not suffer eternal torments, and that, being again reconciled to God and restored to his favour, you may for ever enjoy that happiness for which you were at first created.’—Let us consider what ought to be the answer of every Christian that has any sense of gratitude, and any concern for his soul, —‘I abhor that sin for which thou art so kind and merciful as to die. I am astonished at the love of God who did not overlook lost mankind, (for ever blessed be his holy name) and has sent thee his only Son, to redeem us,—to redeem and save us from ruin, even when we were the enemies of God. I shall be the most ungrateful creature, if I do not abhor and forsake those sins which could not be forgiven without so great a sacrifice. And, the sacrifice being so infinitely great, I will depend upon it for the pardon of all my sins, though never so many and great.’—**WILSON.**

And set up over his head his accusation written, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. How doth God concur with the actions of sinful men, contrary to their designs and purposes! Pilate, when he wrote this title over the cross, in various languages (Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, Luke xxiii. 38.), perhaps did it only to gratify his humour ; but God so directed it that all nations intimated by those languages might read there that this Jesus was the Saviour of all the world ; and that no nation was excluded from a title to the merits of his cross and passion. O Jesus ! thou art no respecter of persons ; but in every nation whosoever serves thee and works righteousness is accepted of thee ! But to men that knew not God, these things were of no value.

Our sins were the cause of that death. It is true that the love of God was the impulsive cause, but our sins were the instrumental cause, these brought him to the cross ; and whoever remembers his death must necessarily remember that whereby this death was effected and procured ; and this was our sin and the infection that attended it. But then, if I remember my sins in the remembrance of Christ’s death, how can I remember them without detestation ? How can I remember them without abhorrence ? How can I remember them without arming my soul with resolution and arguments to fight against them ? Can I look on my neglects, and not charge them with his death ? Can I remember my love to the world,

and not accuse it of having had a hand in buffeting and reproaching him? Can I think of my pride and wrath, and not bid them look on the wounds they made in that holy flesh? Can I reflect on my wantonness and impure thoughts, words, desires, gestures, actions, and not be angry with them for having struck nails into his hands and feet? And what is said of these particular sins must be applied to the rest that we are either guilty of, or inclined to. They must be represented to our minds in their odious shapes, as having been accessory to his death. And if this be done, we cannot but proclaim war against them, and maintain that war all our days.

Christians! As great as the agonies were, thy sins did put him to; as great as the torments were, he felt upon thy account; as bitter as the death was, he suffered and tasted for thee; yet, if thy soul relents, and if that which made him die becomes loathsome and abominable in thy sight, if a deep sense of thy unworthiness fills the channels of thy heart, if the weight of thy sins presses thy soul into a holy self-abhorrence, if his sufferings can fright thy sins into a languishing condition, and his broken body proves a motive strong enough, and obliges thee to break loose from the government of hell;—then, behold, those very wounds thou madest shall be thy balsam: and the blood thy sins did spill, shall turn into oil to heal thy broken bones, and with it thy soul shall be washed; that which was

his death shall be thy life and antidote; with that offering of himself, once made, he will expiate thy guilt, and perfume thy services, render them acceptable to God, give thee a right to heaven, comfort thee in all thy tribulation, and say unto thy soul, “Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.”—HORNECK.

HYMN.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but dross,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things which charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown!

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

WATTS.

§ XCII.

CHAP. XXVII. 39—49.

Christ, on the cross, is reviled.

39 ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying, ‘Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. ‘If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 ^a He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 ^a The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45 ^m Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour ^a Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, ^o My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, ^r and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

^g Ps. xxii. 7; & cix. 26. Mark xv. 29. Luke xxiii. 36. ^A ch. xxvi. 61. John ii. 19. ^f ch. xxi. 63. ^A Ps. xxii. 8. ^Wisd. ii. 16, 17, 18. ^f Mark xv. 32. Luke xxiii. 36. ^m Amos viii. 9. Mark xv. 33. Luke xxiii. 44. ^s Heb. v. 7. ^o Ps. xii. 1. ^Ps. lxxix. 21. Mark xv. 36. Luke xxiii. 36. John xix. 29.

READER.—*And they that passed by, reviled him, &c.*—To add to the afflictions of the Lord Jesus, the rulers and the chief-priests mocked and reviled him in these words, 'He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him; for he said he was the Son of God.' This was a judicial blindness indeed; that they should use the very words which the Spirit of God had, in their own Scriptures, foretold would be said to him whose hands and feet should be pierced; Ps. xxii. 8. Amazing blindness! They could not see that they were themselves fulfilling that prophecy of the Messiah.—Others railed upon him, and said, 'He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him to be the king of the Jews.' What blind and ignorant creatures we are when left to ourselves! These people did not consider that faith is the gift of God; without which all the miracles in the world will not make us believe what we have no mind to believe.—To add still to the Redeemer's affliction, the very malefactors, one of them at least, reviled him; the other (as St. Luke informs us) his heart being touched by the all-powerful Spirit of Christ, acknowledged his sins, and had the comfortable assurance of a pardon. By these two instances we may receive instruction. By one of them we are warned to be careful and afraid to

continue in sin till we come to die, lest we provoke God to leave us to ourselves, for then we shall never repent, never be saved; while the other may preserve the greatest sinners from utter despair, for we do not know how far God's mercy may extend.—WILSON.

Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.—If we would increase much in holiness, and be strong against the temptations to sin, let us view much and so seek to know much, of the death of Jesus Christ. Consider often at how high a rate we were redeemed from sin, and provide this answer for all the enticements of sin and of the world. Except you can offer my soul something beyond the price that was given for it on the cross, I cannot hearken to you. Far be it from me, will a Christian say, who considers this redemption, that ever I should prefer a base lust, or anything in this world, or it all, to him who gave himself to death for me, and paid my ransom with his blood. His matchless love hath freed me from the miserable captivity of sin, and hath for ever fastened me to the sweet yoke of his obedience. Let him alone dwell and rule within me; and never let him go forth from my heart who for my sake refused to come down from the cross.—LEIGHTON.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.—The sun had a veil upon his face, and taught us to draw a curtain before the passion, which would be the most artificial expres-

sion of its greatness; whilst by silence and wonder we confess it great beyond our expression, or, which is all one, great as the burden and baseness of our sin.—TAYLOR.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? The last sufferings of Christ were either corporeal, as shame, mockings, buffets, trials, scourging, condemnation, and an ignominious and cursed death; or spiritual; and those were principally two:

First: A punishment of dereliction; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? There was some kind of separation between God and Christ during the time of his sufferings for sin in that cursed manner. For understanding whereof we must note that he had a four-fold union unto God. 1. In his human nature, which was so fast united in his person unto the divine, that death itself did not separate it either from the person or from the deity. It was the Lord who lay in the grave. 2. In love: and so there was never any separation either; but when he hanged on the cross, he was still the beloved Son of the Father, in whom he was well pleased. 3. In the communion of his Spirit, and holiness; and in that regard likewise there was no disunion, for he was offered up as a lamb without spot or blemish. 4. In the fruition of the light of his countenance, and of his glory and favour; and in this respect there was, for the time of his sufferings, a dereliction, by the withdrawing of his countenance, not

by the dissolving of his union. He looked upon Christ, as a God armed against the sins of the world which were then upon him.

Secondly: There was a punishment of malediction. Christ underwent the curse of the law, he grappled with the wrath of God, and the powers of darkness; he felt the scourges due unto our sins in his human nature, which forced and wrung from him those strong cries, those deep and woful complaints, that bloody and bitter sweat, which drew compassion from the very rocks. And surely it is no derogation to the dignity of Christ's person, but, on the other side, a great magnifying of the justice of God against sin, of the power of Christ against the law, and of the mercy of them both towards sinners, to affirm that the sufferings of Christ, whatever they were in the kind of them, were yet, in their weight and pressure, equally grievous with those we should have suffered; for being in all things, save sin, like unto us, and most of all in his liableness to the curse of the law (so far as it did not necessarily denote either sin inherent, or weakness to break through, in the person suffering), I see no reason why he should not be obnoxious to as great extremities of pain; for no degree of mere anguish and pain can be unbefitting the person of him who was to be known by that title, 'A man of sorrows.' And surely, it was far more indignity for him to suffer a violent death of body from the hands of base men, than to suffer with patience, obedience, and

victory, far sorer stripes from the hand of God his Father, who was pleased to lay upon him the iniquity of us all.—REYNOLDS.

Call to mind, O sinful creature, and set before thine eyes, Christ crucified: think thou seest his body stretched out at length upon the cross, his head crowned with sharp thorns, and his hands and feet pierced with nails, his heart opened with a long spear, his flesh rent and torp with whips, his brows sweating water and blood; think thou hearest him now crying in an intolerable agony to his Father, and saying, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Couldst thou behold this woful sight, or hear this mournful voice, without tears, considering that he suffered all this not for any desert of his own, but only for the grievousness of thy sins? O that mankind should put the everlasting Son of God to such pains! O that we should be the occasion of his death, and the only cause of his condemnation! May we not justly cry, Woe worth the time that ever we sinned? O my brethren, let this image of Christ crucified be always printed in our hearts; let it stir us up to the hatred of sin, and provoke our minds to the earnest love of Almighty God.—HOMILY OF THE PASSION.

HYMN.

My Saviour, didst thou die for me?
For me send forth that bitter cry!
With bleeding heart thy wounds I see,
Prepared at thy command to die.

ST. MATTHEW XXVII. 50—56.

By all thine anguish on the cross,
When God thy Father stood afar,
Rich in thy temporary loss,
The church is brought for ever near.

From far the beamings of thy throne
Revive my sympathising heart ;
Thy love made sinner's griefs thy own,
Mine in thy joys must take its part.

Midst all the splendours of thy reign,
Think on the sorrows thou hast felt ;
Nor let a mourner weep in vain,
For whom thy precious blood was spilt.

While through earth's darkest gloom I tread
Dart on my soul a cheering ray ;
And on the confines of the dead
Thy power, as Lord of life, display.

DODDRIDGE.

§ XCIII.

CHAP. XXVII. 50—56.

Christ dieth.

50 ¶ ' Jesus, when he had
cried again with a loud voice,
yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, ' the veil of
the temple was rent in twain
from the top to the bottom ;
and the earth did quake, and
the rocks rent ;

52 And the graves were
opened ; and many bodies of
the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the
graves after his resurrection,
and went into the holy city,
and appeared unto many.

54 ' Now when the centu-
rion, and they that were with
him, watching Jesus, saw the

earthquake, and those things
that were done, they feared
greatly, saying, Truly this was
the Son of God.

55 And many women were
there beholding afar off, ' which
followed Jesus from Galilee,
ministering unto him :

56 " Among which was Mary
Magdalene, and Mary the mo-
ther of James and Joses, and
the mother of Zebedee's chil-
dren.

¶ Mark xv. 37. Luke xxiii. 46. 7 Ex. xxvi. 31.
2 Chron. iii. 14. Mark xv. 38. Luke xxiii. 45. 8 ver. 36.
Mark xv. 39. Luke xxiii. 47. 9 Luke viii. 2, 3. 10 Mark
xv. 40.

READER.—*Jesus, when he had cried
again with a loud voice, yielded up the
ghost.*—Let us suppose ourselves to
be standing or passing by the cross,
whilst our Saviour was hanging
upon it, and apprehend him crying
out, as he justly might, after this
or the like manner :

" Is it nothing to you all ye that
pass by ? Behold and see if there
be any sorrow like unto my sorrow,"
which is done unto me, " wherewith
the Lord hath afflicted me in the
day of his fierce anger ?" Behold
and see what your sins have done,
what they have done to me, the
eternal Son of God, the only be-
gotten of the Father. See what scorn
and contempt they have brought
upon me, what spittle they have
thrown in my face, what gashes they
have made in my head, what wounds
in my hands and feet, what bloody
sweat over my whole body ! And
yet, alas, all that you can see is
nothing in comparison of what I

ST. MATTHEW XXVII. 50—56.

feel; I feel the wrath of God, the wrath of my beloved Father, and all that fury and vengeance which is due to your sins; it all now centres in me. Oh, the fire now kindled in my breast; enough to burn up ten thousand such as you to nothing! How doth it flame and spread itself over my whole man! "My throat is dry, my heart is faint, my soul is sorrowful unto death." What a load is now upon me! What a burden do I now bear! No less than the sin of the whole world! A burden so great, so heavy, so grievous to be borne, that I myself should sink under it, but that I am supported by my Almighty power and Godhead. Oh that you could but look into my breast, that you did but know what pain and anguish, what horror and confusion, I there suffer for your sins: so that either I must die now, or else you must die for ever. And therefore, behold my love; rather than you should die eternally. I myself, for your sakes, now give up the ghost and die!

Can we possibly apprehend our Lord complaining thus, as he justly might, upon the cross, and not sympathise and condole with him? Blessed Lord, we cannot; we cannot but grieve with thee, having been the cause of all this grief unto thee. It cuts us to the heart, to see thy blessed body thus torn and mangled, and to consider how thy innocent soul is oppressed and tormented for our sins, for those sins which we have taken pleasure and delight in. But now

thy death and passion bring them all into our minds; and make us possess our former iniquities, which are as "a sore burden too heavy for us to bear." Wherefore, we humble ourselves before thee; we abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. "Oh that our heads were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears, that we might weep day and night." That nothing may come so near our hearts, nothing lie so heavy upon our spirits, nothing be so grievous and painful to us, as the remembrance of our having lived so as to cause thee, in whom we live, to die. But shall we do so still? No: by thy assistance we will grieve our sins to death, and give up our lives to thee who hast given thine for us.—BEVERIDGE.

Now the sacrifice is offered; and this death reconciles God to the sinful world! This death, which had been so often foretold, both by the prophets, and by Christ himself, is at last accomplished; and pardon of sin, and the possibility of men's arriving to eternal life, by a true repentance, is hereby purchased! This death puts an end to the curse of the law; and from this death we may date our happiness. Though wicked men, who had a hand in it, were the means whereby it was effected, yet the Son of God would die; and his voluntary death is the meritorious cause of our eternal life. Oh, look upon it with wonder and admiration. And while we stand amazed at it, let us see withal how we ourselves may end our days. St. Luke tells us, that "when Jesus

had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And having said thus, he gave up the ghost." If we live like children of God, our Father will not send us to hell; but, being a Father, he will stretch forth his almighty arms, and receive us to himself, like a faithful creator.—HORNECK.

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.—God can, as he will, alter the courses of nature, and dispense with the rules which himself had secretly imposed upon the creatures to observe. This shews that they are not, in themselves, immutable. That constancy which in their motions they observe, is from the regular government of that most wise Providence which carries them to their end without any turning, Ezek. i. 17; but when his glory requires, and his will commands it, the mountains tremble, the sea cleaves asunder, the rivers run back, the earth opens, the laws of nature stand still for a while without any execution, as if they were suspended or repealed by him that made them.

—REYNOLDS.

If ever nature endured a convulsion, it did now. The sun disdained to look upon the barbarity of the murder, and hid his face, that he might not see his Creator die. The earth trembled, as if it were ashamed to see men stupid at the dreadful spectacle. The rocks broke, as

if they would testify against the sinners that could stand under the cross without broken hearts. The veil of the temple was rent, as if it would chide the wretches that could see the Messiah suffer without rending their clothes, and, what is more, tearing themselves for the crime they had been guilty of. The graves burst their bands, as if they were concerned to see men hardened against all impressions of compassion. The angels, we may believe, stopped in their Hallelujahs; and if ever there was sadness in heaven, we may suppose it was at this time. The upper and the lower world seemed to go into mourning, because their Lord and Master gave up the ghost. The death of Jesus Christ is surprising, beyond comparison.—HORNECK.

Now, when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And St. Luke tells us, "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man."

To make a right construction of things is the way to spiritual wisdom. This man justly concluded that heaven could not possibly shew itself so much concerned about a person if he were not an extraordinary favourite. He judged rationally; and this brought him to a true knowledge of Christ, and to an open confession and declaration of the sufferer's innocence. Let us, in like manner, consider by what

miracles and testimonies the truth which we profess hath been confirmed, and conclude that it is divine. No religion hath those evidences of its divinity and celestial origin that the Christian hath. Since it comes from God, we have the greatest reason to believe that all its promises and threatenings will be fulfilled. And seeing that all these shall be fulfilled, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

—HORNECK.

They feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.—Is it possible] to behold God's bleeding love, and not cry, Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion? Is it possible to see the surprising humiliation of the Son of God, and not to say, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name? Is it possible to see God offer himself for his enemies and not to sing, Lord, what is man, that thou so regardest him? and the sons and daughters of men that thou hast such respect unto them? Is it possible to see innocence nailed to the fatal cross, not for any sins of its own, but for our transgressions, and not to break forth into admiration with St. John, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God? The heart must be of stone that can survey these wonders and be silent, or dumb to joyful praises.—HORNECK.

It is not enough that we believe that Christ died for mankind in general; but every one should

believe that Christ died for him and for his sins in particular; so as to apply the sufferings of the human nature in Christ to his own particular human person. For, seeing it is expressly said that Christ tasted death for every man, every man ought to believe that he did it for him, Heb. ii. 9. And as no man can believe this except he repent, so no man can truly repent of all his sins, but he may and ought to believe this, even that Christ died for him and for those very sins which he hath repented of. Thus we find St. Paul acting his faith so as to appropriate Christ unto himself. "I am crucified," saith he, "with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20.

Thus every one that repents and believes the gospel should look upon himself as particularly interested in what Christ did and suffered for mankind, as much as if he had done and suffered it only for him; so that I am bound, and so is every one else, not only "to confess with my mouth," but to "believe in my heart" that he became the Son of man, that I might become the Son of God; he assumed my human, that I might partake of his Divine nature. He was "delivered for my offences" and "raised again for my justification;" he was "made sin for me," that, "I might be made the righteousness of God in him;" he died, that I might

live, and was crucified by men that I might be glorified with God for ever; for "he loved me, and gave himself for me:" and, therefore, now that I remember his death, and see him, methinks, upon the cross, I cannot but cry out, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world in general, and my sins in particular!"—
BEVERIDGE.

How loudly also does the cross of the Redeemer proclaim in the ears of every careless and ungodly man—as in the words of the Apostle,—“Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God LEADETH THEE TO REPENTANCE?” Rom. ii. 4.

HYMN.

When the first parents of our race
Rebell'd and lost their God,
And the infection of their sin
Had tainted all our blood;

Infinite pity touch'd the heart
Of the eternal Son;
Descending from the heavenly court,
He left his Father's throne.

Aside the prince of glory threw
His most Divine array,
And wrapt his Godhead in a veil
Of our inferior clay.

His living power, and dying love,
Redeemed unhappy men,
And rais'd the ruins of our race
To life and God again.

To thee, dear Lord, our flesh and soul
We joyfully resign;
Blest Jesus, take us for thine own,
For we are doubly thine.

WATTS.

§ XCIV.

CHAP. XXVII. 57—66.

Christ is buried; his sepulchre is sealed and watched.

57 * When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple :

58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And ' laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock : and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 ¶ Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, * After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure

until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, "sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

r Mark xv. 42. Luke xxiii. 50. John xix. 38. y Is. liii. 9. s ch. xvi. 21; & xvii. 23; & xx. 19; & xxv. 61. Mark viii. 31; & x. 34. Luke ix. 22; & xviii. 32; & xxiv. 6, 7. John ii. 19. a Dan. vi. 17.

READER.—*There came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also was Jesus' disciple.*

St. Luke tells us, respecting this Joseph of Arimathæa, that he was "a counsellor; and he was a good man and a just." He adds also that he "had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;" and that he "waited for the kingdom of God."

In the midst of temptations, God preserves this man; although his riches, greatness, reputation and friendship of the grandees did strongly entice him to consent to the death of the Lord Jesus, yet he would not; and was resolved to hazard all rather than have a hand in the condemnation. We live in a very evil generation. Let us dare to preserve our integrity, in the midst of all the floods of ungodliness that surround us. And the more we may be discouraged from good-

ness and righteousness, the more vigorously let us stand up for it and maintain it; and God will be with us.

To wait for the kingdom of God, as Joseph did, is the way to resist and to overcome temptations. He that is resolved not to lose his share in God's kingdom hereafter, will not stand upon his losses and crosses here, for he knows that the future kingdom will recompense all. No man will venture so much for Christ, as he that firmly believes the kingdom of God, and fixes his eye of faith upon it. May the Lord give us a clear sight of that kingdom, that nothing may beguile or tempt us to love the world! If we love the world, the love of the Father cannot be in us. May he represent the beauty of his kingdom to our mind in lively characters, that our admiration of the present world may decay, and we may be content to sell all for the pearl of great price that is before us!

He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.—It is base to forsake a friend when he is under a cloud; but then to shew our respect for him when he is unjustly under contempt and disgrace is true affection. It was bold and great, and and like a friend, to beg the body of Jesus when it was counted a disgrace to be any way concerned for him. Let us be earnest with our God, to give us invincible integrity, which may mock all storms and be the same to God and our neighbour, in all conditions. Let us stick close to God and to our

friends, and rejoice in a good conscience; for that will bring us peace at the last.

And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock. Religion is an insignificant thing, if it costs us nothing. Good men love to be at charges for their God, and the good of their own souls. Too many men love to serve God cheaply; and are backward to express their gratitude to God by being liberal to his distressed members, and to their spiritual guides. Let us learn by this example, to prize our spiritual good more highly; and let our bountiful actions shew that we set the highest value on the blessings of eternity.

And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.—O blessed Redeemer, who didst remember me when I had forgotten thee, and thoughtest of me when I did not regard thee! When I lay buried in the common mass of corruption, thou didst not disdain to think on this thy forlorn creature! Thou didst pity me, thou sawest my misery, and it grieved thee at thy heart. O happy remembrance! I had been lost if thou hadst not looked upon me, I had been undone if thou hadst not cast thine eye upon me. Yet how backward have I been to think upon thee! What an aversion have I had from remembering thee! How have I declined serious affections of thy love; and have more delighted in trifles than in thee.

How sweet have the thoughts of my corn and wine and oil been to me; and how tedious, how irksome, the contemplation of thee! When thou hast sometimes put me in mind of thy sufferings, how have I suffered worldly thoughts to drive thee out of my mind! How justly mightest thou turn thine eyes away and hide thy face from me. O sweet and glorious object, appear in thy beauty, appear in thy glory to my mind; that I may be thoroughly convinced that nothing deserves my thoughts so much as thyself. I am resolved to remember thee with greater delight and constancy. Help thou me. Should I not remember thee, who hast in a manner forgotten thyself in order to remember me? I can remember a temporal deliverance, and shall not the deliverance of my soul, procured by thy death, be remembered by me? I can remember a disaster which hath some years ago befallen me; and shall I not remember the infinite misery from which thou camest to rescue me? I will think of thee in the night watches; I will think of thee when I lie down, when I awake, when I rise again. In the great ordinance of thy Supper, I will in a most solemn manner think of thee. Teach me to remember thee with joy, with pleasure, with comfort to my soul. Let my thoughts of thee be sweet. Whenever I think on thy cross, let me remember how by thy charity I was freed from the curse of God. Thou becamest a curse for me. Ought not this mercy to

be remembered for ever? Write it in my mind; engrave it upon my heart; let this remembrance be easy to me; and make it profitable to me, that my inward man may be renewed by it day by day, and abound in love; and the longer I live the more conformable may I be to thee, blessed Jesus; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.—HORNBECK.

And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. Let us sit there, in thought, with them; and there.

Let us consider what are the uses Christians ought to make of their knowledge of the death of Christ and of his resurrection.

And, in the first place, let us be assured, that we cannot truly understand how much God is displeased with sin and sinners but only by looking upon Jesus Christ on the cross; where we see that God would not spare his own Son, when he had put himself into the room and place of sinners, but made him to suffer what they by their sins had deserved to suffer. That sin deserves death, this we must be assured of, because the righteous judge of all the earth pronounced that sentence upon our first parents, in case they transgressed the law he had given them. And they had most surely died the moment they sinned, but that the Son of God undertook to satisfy his Father's justice, by undergoing the punishment which they had deserved. And it was on that account

their lives were continued, and a time of trial granted them, to see what use they would make of this favour.

In the next place, we learn, by the sufferings of Christ, the exceeding love of God for us poor creatures; that he would suffer his own Son to take our nature upon him, and to be so sadly used, rather than so great a part of his creation should be utterly lost and ruined. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This being the greatest token of the love of God should lead us to love God with all our soul, and mind, and strength. And the infinite obligations which we Christians have to love Jesus Christ for what he suffered for us obliged St. Paul to give this standing rule to the church, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," that is, leave him to the judgment of God, and do not own him for a Christian.

Now, let us consider the end of all this, and why our knowledge and belief of Christ's death is so much pressed upon us by the Holy Spirit of God. Is it not because this is the very foundation of that holiness without which no man must ever see the Lord in peace? "Jesus Christ died for all, that they who live should not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again." Nothing being more just and reasonable than that we should consecrate our lives to him, which he has redeemed from the

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 1—10.

power of the devil and saved us from death eternal.

The end of Christ's suffering was to save us from our sins, that he might purify unto him a peculiar people "zealous of good works." "If a man love me," says Christ, if he values me, and what I have done for him, "he will keep my commandments." And for our souls' and for God's sake, let us often remember that it is utterly impossible that any man should be happy without being restored, by a holy life, to the image of God:—that alone can make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in heaven.—WILSON.

They went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. Now he is buried. And because he had openly declared that they should kill him, and that after three days he would rise again from the dead, the Jews took all imaginable care to secure the body till after the third day; they procured a guard of soldiers to watch the sepulchre, and sealed the stone that covered the door of the tomb. And such was the order of providence that not one of the Apostles were concerned in his burial. Thus God, in a manner we do not always take notice of, confirms our faith.—WILSON.

HYMN.

Why do we mourn departing friends
Or shake at death's alarms ?
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
To calls them to his arms.

Why should we tremble to convey
Their relics to the tomb ?

There the Redeemer's body lay,
And left a long perfume.

The graves of all his saints he bless'd,
And soften'd every bed ;
Where should the dying members rest
But with the dying head ?

Thence he arose, ascending high,
And showed our feet the way ;
Up to the Lord our flesh shall fly
At the great rising day.

Then let the last loud trumpet sound
And bid our kindred rise ;
Awake, ye nations under ground,
Ye saints, ascend the skies !

WATTS.

§ XCV.

CHAP. XXVIII. 1—10.

Christ's resurrection is declared by an angel to the women. He himself appeareth to them.

IN the ° end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene ° and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there ° was a great earthquake : for ° the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 ° His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow ;

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 1—10.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, ^e as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, ^f he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, ^g Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell ^h my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

^a Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1. ^b ch. xxvii. 56. ^c Or had been. ^c See Mark xvi. 5. Luke xxiv. 4. John xx. 12. ^d Dan. x. 6. ^e ch. xii. 40: & xvi. 21; & xvii. 23; & xx. 19. ^f ch. xxvi. 32. Mark xvi. 7. ^g See Mark xvi. 9. John xx. 14. ^h See John xx. 17. Rom. viii. 29. Heb. ii. 11.

READER.—*The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*—The resurrection of Christ assureth us of the accomplishment of his work of mediation on earth, and that he is now in the

execution of those other offices which remain to be fulfilled by him in heaven for the application of his sacrifice unto us; for, having in the resurrection justified himself, he thereby rose for our justification likewise, Rom. iv. 25. For if the debt had not been taken quite off by the surety, it would have been upon the principal still. And therefore, the Apostle proveth the resurrection by this, that God's mercies are sure, Acts xiii. 34; whereas, if Christ were not risen from the dead, we should be yet in our sins; and so, by consequence, the mercies of David should have failed us, 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18. And for this reason it is, as I conceive, that the Lord sent an angel to remove the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; not to supply any want of power in him who could himself have rolled away the stone with one of his fingers; but, as a judge, when the law is satisfied, sendeth an officer to open the prison door to him who hath made that satisfaction, so the Father, to testify that his justice was fully satisfied with the price which his Son had paid, sent an officer of heaven to open the doors of the grave.—

REYNOLDS.

He is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. When humbled to the lowest, then nearest his exaltation, as Joseph in the prison. He could die, for he was a man, and a man for that purpose that he might die; but he could not be overcome by death, for he was God: yea, by dying, he overcame death, and so shewed himself

truly the Lord of life. He strangled that lion in his own den. The whale swallowed Jonah, but it could not digest him; it was forced to cast him up again at the appointed time; wherein the prophet was a figure of this great prophet Jesus Christ.

He hath made a breach through death and opened up a passage on the other side of it into life. They who believe, who lay hold on him by faith, they come through with him, follow him out at the same breach, pass through death into heaven. But the rest find not the passage out; it is as the Red Sea, passable only to the Israelites; therefore they must of necessity sink quite downwards through the grave into hell, through the first death into the second, and that is the most terrible of all. That death is indeed what one called the other, 'the most terrible of all terribles,—the king of terrors' as it is in Job.

Now, the only assurance of that happy second resurrection to the life of glory hereafter, is the first resurrection here to the life of grace. For the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to the believer the evidence of his resurrection completed, that all was paid by Christ as his surety, and so he set at liberty, Rom. viii. 33. Nor is it only the pattern and pledge of a believer's resurrection, but it is the efficient cause both of that last resurrection of his body to glory, and of the first, of his soul to grace.

The life of a believer is derived and flows forth from Christ as his

head, and is mystically one life with his; and, therefore, as himself expresses it, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. Therefore is he called the "first begotten from the dead, and the beginning," Col. i. 18. He is first in all; and from him spring all those streams that "make glad the city of God." Therefore the Apostle, in his thanksgiving for our new life and lively hopes, 1 Peter i. 3, leaves not out that "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" that is the conduit of all. And he expresses it in the same place, that we are "begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead." But alas! we prejudice ourselves of all the rich comfort that is wrapped up in this, by living to ourselves and our lusts, and to the world, having not our consciences purified from dead works. How few of us are there who set that ambition of Paul before us, desiring above all things to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, to be made conformable unto his death." Phil. iii. 10. That is the knowledge, as he there expresses it, a lively experienced knowledge, of that power.

This rightly considered will answer all doubt and fears in the church's hardest times. When in its deliverance there appears nothing but impossibilities, when so low that its enemies are persuaded to conclude that it shall never rise again, and its friends are oppressed with fearing so much, yet he who brought his own Son Jesus from

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 1—10.

the dead, can and will restore his church, for which he gave his only begotten Son to the death. "Son of man" says he, "can these dry bones live?" Ezek. xxxii. 3. Thus often looks the church's deliverance, which is there the proper sense. The prophet answered most wisely, "Lord, thou knowest;" as though he had said, It is a work only for thee to know and to do. And by his Spirit they were revived. And so here, it looked hopeless, as the disciples thought; they were at the point of giving it over, and blaming almost their former credulity. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done." True; the third day was come, but it was not yet ended; yea, he rose in the beginning of it, though they as yet knew it not, nor him to be present to whom they spake; but toward the end of it, they likewise knew that he was risen, when he was pleased to discover himself to them. Thus, though the enemies of the church prevail so far against it that it seems buried, and a stone laid to the grave's mouth, yet, it shall rise again, at the very fittest, the appointed, time, as Christ the third day. Thus the church expresses her confidence, Hos. vi. 2, "In the third day he will raise us up." Whatsoever it suffers, it shall gain by it; and be more beautiful and glorious in its restoration.—LEIGHTON.

And as they went to tell his disciples,
894

behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.—O holy and eternal Jesus, who hast overcome death, and triumphed over all the powers of hell, darkness, sin and the grave; manifesting the truth of thy promises, the power of thy divinity, the majesty of thy person, the rewards of thy glory, and the mercies and excellent designs of thy evangelical kingdom, by thy glorious and powerful resurrection; preserve my soul from eternal death, and make me to rise from the death of sin, and to live the life of grace; loving thy perfections, adoring thy mercy, pursuing the interests of thy kingdom, being united to the church under thee our head; conforming to thy holy laws, established in faith; entertained and confirmed with a modest, humble, and certain hope, and sanctified by charity; that I, engraving thee in my heart, and submitting to thee in my spirit, and imitating thee in thy glorious example, may be partaker of thy resurrection; which is my hope and my desire, the support of my faith, the object of my joy, and the strength of my confidence. In thee, holy Jesus, do I trust; I confess thy faith, I believe all that thou hast taught, I desire to perform all thy injunctions, and my own undertaking. My soul is in thy hand; do thou support and guide it, and pity my infirmities; and when thou shalt reveal thy great day, shew to me the mercies and effects of thy advocacy, and intercession, and redemption. "Thou shalt answer

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 11—17.

for me, O Lord my God ; for in thee have I trusted ; let me never be confounded." Thou art just ; thou art merciful ; thou art gracious and compassionate ; thou hast done miracles and prodigies of favour, to me, and to all the world. Let not those great actions and sufferings be ineffectual, but make me capable and receptive of thy mercies ; and then I am certain to receive them. I am thine, O save me ! Thou art mine, O holy Jesus ! O dwell with me for ever, and let me dwell with thee, adoring and praising the eternal glories of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.—
TAYLOR.

HYMN I.

Christ, the Lord, is risen to-day,
Sons of men, and angels, say ;
Raise your songs and triumphs high,
Sing ye heavens, and earth reply.

Love's redeeming work is done,
Fought the fight, the battle won :
Lo ! our Sun's eclipse is o'er
Lo ! he sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal ;
Christ hath burst the gates of hell ;
Death in vain forbids his rise,
Christ hath open'd paradise.

Lives again our glorious king,
Where, O death is now thy sting ?
Once he died our souls to save ;
Where's thy victory, O grave ?

Soar we now where Christ hath led,
Following our exalted head ;
Made like him, like him we rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

HYMN II.

Blest be the wisdom and the power,
The justice and the grace,

Which join'd in council to restore
And save our ruin'd race.

Our Father ate forbidden fruit,
And from his glory fell ;
And we his children, thus were brought
To death, and near to hell.

Blest be the Lord, who sent his Son,
To take our flesh and blood ;
He for our lives gave up his own
To make our peace with God.

He honour'd all his Father's laws
Which we have disobey'd ;
He bore our sins upon the cross,
And our full ransom paid.

Behold him rising from the grave !
Behold him rais'd on high ;
He pleads his merits there to save
Transgressors doom'd to die.

There on a glorious throne he reigns,
And, by his pow'r divine,
Redeems us from the slavish chains
Of Satan and of sin.

Thence shall the Lord to judgment come,
And, with a sov'reign voice,
Shall call, and break up ev'ry tomb,
While waking saints rejoice.

Oh, may we then with joy appear
Before the Judge's face ;
And with the blest assembly there,
Sing his redeeming grace !

WATTS.

§ XCVI.

CHAP. XXVIII. 11—17.

The high priests give the people money to say that Christ was stolen out of his sepulchre. Christ appeareth to his disciples.

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed
395

unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

1 ch. xvii. 32. ver. 7.

READER.—*They gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.*—These men had entertained in their hearts an aversion from our Saviour's person and character, because of the humble condition in which he appeared;—they hated his doctrine, because it discovered their vile hypocrisy, and required such a righteousness as far exceeded that they boasted of;—they decried his miracles, because they were wrought to

confirm a doctrine which they would not receive:—in short, they proceeded so far, at last, as by false accusations and false witnesses to take away his life; and, being thus prejudiced against him, they could not hear of his resurrection from the dead, but with the utmost disdain and vexation of mind; for this made them murderers, at least, of a person beloved by God, who otherwise would not have raised him to life again, after they had crucified him. These things put them upon the vile act set down in the text,—to hire men to set abroad a lie, which they themselves had forged.

And there is nothing, in this whole proceeding, which is not natural, and which is not acted every day by men who are given over to a mind void of judgment. They hate the persons and characters of such as plainly reprove them;—they hate the doctrines which would restrain them from following their own inclinations;—and by these prejudices are prepared to do the vilest thing to discredit what they hate so bitterly.

Now, these passages are recorded in the Gospel and in other Scriptures, not to make us find fault with others, but that we may discover the corruption of our own hearts, by the faults we may observe in other people. And in this instance we learn how very hard it is, when we have done a weak or an ill thing, to be brought to own it, and to confess that we have been in the wrong. The Jews here would not consider what a wicked thing they had done,

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 11—17.

and how bitterly they ought to repent of it, if this person whom they had crucified were indeed, what he said he was, the Son of God. If what the soldiers said were true, it was manifest he was more than man; and yet, they durst not inquire into the truth of this, because it would necessarily create them great trouble of mind;—they therefore took the short and usual way to get rid of the shame and confusion which attends conviction; they gave out that Christ was not risen, but that his disciples had stolen him away,—and they hired others to say the same thing;—hoping by this means to get quit of the shame of having murdered an innocent person. As for the guilt of such an act, such persons seldom lay that to heart.

Now, what are we to learn from all this? Why, in the first place, never to take up a prejudice against a thing or person, without reason; for it is plain we cannot lay it down when we please. There is no question of it, but these very elders, who agreed to give money to propagate a lie of their own making, yet spoke what they thought when, but three days before, they mockingly told our Saviour that, if he would but come down from the cross, they would believe him to be the Messiah. Alas, we do not know what will convince a mind averse from the truth! For though God was not pleased to gratify the demands of those wicked men, and to satisfy them after their own way (because he knew nothing would convince them), yet when he did that very

thing, which they said would satisfy them, after a more wonderful way,—when he had suffered him to die upon the cross, and to be buried in their sight,—when their malice and their caution could go no further,—then God took him out of their hand, raised him to life, made their own watch witnesses of his resurrection,—which was a much greater miracle than they demanded,—yet they did not believe, but very wickedly attempted to pervert the truth by bribing the watch.

And here we have another instance, in this watch, of the corruption and deceitfulness of all our hearts. It was but just before that they were so terrified with the sight of an angel, that they became as dead men; and one would have thought that they would not so soon have forgotten their fears, or be tempted with the greatest reward to set about a lie, which they very well knew to be so. But while we wonder at this, we do not consider that this is too often acted by ourselves.—The providence of God brings us into troubles, or terrifies us with his judgments; and yet no sooner are we recovered of our fears but we return to our old ways, and are ready for any wickedness the tempter shall lead us into. When, therefore, we resent the hard heartedness either of the Jews, or their watch,—when we wonder at them,—let us look to ourselves, lest we be guilty of the same crimes of which we accuse them; let us consider that the Son of God may be crucified again, and put to open shame;

that this is often done, not by the Jews, his professed enemies, but by Christians who are called by his name. Let us consider that if we live as if we were never to rise again, we do, as much as in us lieth, baffle all the arguments and proofs which God has given us of our Saviour's, and of our own, resurrection. It is true, Christ is risen from the dead, and will come again to judge the world in righteousness; this is true, and will come to pass, whether we believe it or not. But yet we may, by our wicked lives, very much hinder the effects this truth ought to have upon all that hear of it; and so far we are guilty of the same sin the Jews are branded for.

But truth will get the better of falsehood, let who will combine to stifle it. And God will be glorified in the destruction of those who shall despise the means he has ordained for their salvation. We see this plainly in the instance before us; and while God, the God of truth, governs the world, it must be so.—
WILSON.

And when they saw him they worshipped him. It is added, "but some doubted," i. e. did not suffer themselves to believe, at first, that it was really the same Jesus who had been crucified and buried. A remarkable proof of the caution with which they proceeded, and of the absence of credulity as to matters of fact. How valuable is the testimony of these honest men! And how thankful should we be that it pleased the great head of the church to employ

such instruments in propagating his religion.—Let us follow the example of those who saw and believed. Let us contemplate the risen Saviour with the eye of faith; and consider how great reason we have to worship him, and magnify his holy name.—

EDITOR.

His resurrection after his bloody sacrifice is a clear evidence of the sweetness of its savour with God, and its sufficiency for us. He was not totally swallowed up by Divine justice; but he surmounted all the strokes of it, and lifted up his head above the waves that surrounded him. The fetters of death had not been unlocked, if his sacrifice had not been satisfactory. The justice of God might as well have discharged him without any sacrifice at all, as discharged him upon an insufficient one. The freedom, therefore, of the prisoner from his chains is an evidence of the full satisfaction of the debt, and the completeness of the sacrifice; since it is by that God whose name hath that letter in it, "By no means to clear the guilty." Exod. xxxiv. 7.

He was appeased as an offended Lawgiver, before he gave a judicial discharge as the supreme Governor, unloosed the chains of death, sent an angel as his officer to unlock the prison doors, the grave, and set him at full liberty, no more to be arrested. There could be in this case no forcible breaking of prison, he being in the hands of the Almighty God who had as much power to keep him in the chains of death, had his

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 18—20.

sacrifice been blemished, as he had to free him, when his sacrifice was spotless. Justice, therefore, is fully satisfied, since the "pains of death are unloosed," Acts ii. 24, 25; for it was not possible he should be holden of them, because the truth of God was engaged that his "Holy One should not see corruption."

If all men in the world were united to him by faith, there could not be any more required of Christ for their salvation than what he hath already acted; for it is a sacrifice of infinite value, and infinite knows no limits. Since it was sufficient to satisfy an infinite justice, it is sufficient to save an inexpressible number; and the value of it in saving one, argues a virtue in it to save all upon the same condition. Who will question the ability of an almighty power to raise all men from death to life, that hath raised one man from death to life by the speaking of a word? If, therefore, men perish, it is not for want of value, or virtue, or acceptableness in this sacrifice, but for want of answering the terms upon which the enjoyment of the benefit of it is proposed. If a man will shut his eyes against the light of the sun, it argues an obstinacy in the person, not any defect in the sun itself.—CHARNOCK.

HYMN.

The happy morn is come :
Triumphant o'er the grave,
The Saviour leaves the tomb
Omnipotent to save :
Captivity is captive led,
For Jesus liveth, that was dead.

Who now accuses them
For whom their surety died ?
Who now shall those condemn
Whom God has justified ?
Captivity is captive led,
For Jesus liveth, that was dead.

Christ hath the ransom paid,
The glorious work is done ;
On him our help is laid,
By him our victory won.
Captivity is captive led,
For Jesus liveth that was dead !

§ XCVII.

CHAP. XXVIII. 18—20.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ^aAll power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 ¶ 'Go ye therefore, and ^mteach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost :

20 ⁿTeaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

^a Dan. vii. 13, 14, ch. xi. 27; & xvi. 26. Luke i. 22; & x. 22. John iii. 35; & v. 22; & xiii. 3; & xvii. 2. Acts ii. 28. Rom. xiv. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 27. Eph. i. 10, 21. Phil. ii. 9, 10. Heb. i. 2; & ii. 8. 1 Peter iii. 22. Rev. xvii. 14.—^m Mark xvi. 15.—ⁿ 1a. iii. 10. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts ii. 28, 29. Rom. x. 15. Col. i. 23.—^o Or, *make disciples, or, Christians of all nations.*—ⁿ Acts ii. 42.

Reader. These words may be thus explained, by way of paraphrase :—After these and other appearances to them, Jesus said, As I have died to redeem the world in

order to the ends of my undertaking, the Father hath given me an universal propriety and governing power by the right of redemption, as chief administrator under him in heaven and in earth. So that henceforth all the concerns of men in this world and the other are at my disposal; and all men under my government by right and obligation. By which authority I now commission you to go abroad into the world, and make all nations (to the uttermost of your power) my disciples; taking them into my church by solemn covenant, celebrated by baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And when you have baptizd them, and so united them to me and my universal church, (upon their understanding professed faith and repentance, and dedication of their children to me), then congregate them in order under faithful pastors. And as you, as general teachers to all the churches, must deliver to them all the commands which I have committed to your trust (by word and writing), so these pastors must further instruct them that they may grow up in knowledge of all these my commands. And in the performance of this charge, I shall, by the help of my Spirit and protection, be present with you and such pastors in their course, to the end of this world (or age), till I shall come in glory to the final judgment. Though you see me not, I shall be as really assisting to you, and regardful of you, even in your

labours and sufferings, as if you saw me.

NOTE 1. Christ's right of dominion and empire is founded in the Father's covenant with him as Redeemer.— And, being universal Lord, redemption is so far universal, as to prove these and other common effects. "To this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." Rom. xiv. 19.

2. The word translated 'teach,' signifieth 'disciple to me,' or 'make (nations) my disciples.'

3. All Christians should endeavour to make Christianity the national religion, that the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; that is, that they may be Christian kingdoms, and not only Christians gathered out of kingdoms.

4 This maketh not all to be Christians who are in those kingdoms, but only such as are disciplined.

5 Infants being part of all kingdoms, this text commandeth to disciple and baptize them. They are made disciples by being justly dedicated to Christ, (by those who have true power to dispose of them) to learn of him, and obey him as they grow up and are capable. As Christ was relatively head of the church in his infancy, when his human nature was not capable of the actual administration, so are infants capable of being disciples by covenant dedication (by those that have the disposal of them for their good, and can covenant for

them with men), and by relation and obligation. God had never a church on earth of which infants were not infant members, since there were infants in the world.

6. To be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is no less than by solemn covenant to give up one's self to God the Father, as our Father reconciled by Christ, our chief owner and ruler, and chief benefactor, even as our God; and to Christ as our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as our sanctifier. And merely to consent to learn of Christ makes one a baptizable disciple.

7. Baptism is christening, and is the badge of those that must love and take each other for Christians; and the terms of church unity, till it be nullified by verbal or actual apostasy.—And it is church tyranny and schism to make canons which shall exclude those from the Church of Christ whom he taketh in by baptism; before they impenitently nullify that covenant, in whole, or in some essential part, namely, by proved denying essentials of faith, or forsaking some essential part of obedience.

8. He that consenteth heartily and unfeignedly to the baptismal covenant, is regenerate and justified, and shall be saved. And he that doth consent but with the mouth and outward sign, or leaveth out some essential part in his heart-consent, is regenerate only sacramentally, and a visible member of the church, but is not justified, nor shall be saved.

3 E

9. The general command to the disciples of teaching all nations Christ's commands, includeth writing the Scriptures, without which they could not teach posterity in all nations his commands.

10. It maketh them his intrusted apostles, from whose fidelity we may believingly receive his commands; and therefore it includeth the promise of his Spirit to make them true and credible reporters.

11. It implieth that his commands are the universal laws for his catholic (i. e. whole) church. And no man or men have authority to make laws for the universal church on earth but he.

12. Yet the precept of observing his commands forbids not the observing of the commands of any lawful limited local rulers under him, not crossing his commands; parents, masters, pastors, princes, must be obeyed in their provinces and places, even about God's worship. If men make subordinate laws, according to God's general laws of love, concord, edification, order, they must be obeyed.—
BAXTER.

READER. *Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*—See Psalm cx. 1; Eph. i. 20, 21. By this is expressed his dominion and rule as Prince of Peace, the alone king of his church, her suprame lawgiver and mighty protector, and the conqueror of all his enemies;

401

ruling his "holy hill of Zion" with the golden sceptre of his word, and breaking his enemies, the strongest of them, in pieces, with the iron rod of his justice, as we have it in the second Psalm. They attempt in vain to unsettle his throne; it is established in Heaven. What way is there for the worms of this earth to do any thing against it?

The visible church is but a little parcel, a kingdom chosen out of the world; but the truly godly, who are alone the subjects of the inward kingdom of grace, are but a small part of that part, a choice part of the visible church, as that is a small part of the visible world.

The church is the jewel in the ring of the world: in it God hath his peculiar residence and chief delight; as kings choose one of their palaces, and, if they have more, one of their kingdoms, to dwell in more than another. Those things that are hidden from all the rest of the world concerning this king, are made known to his subjects of this his select kingdom; and it is in that he opens up, and displays after a special manner more than in all the world besides, both the glory of his majesty, and the riches of his bounty.—LEIGHTON.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations. The design of the Christian religion being to restore mankind to the mercy and favour of God, from which we are sadly fallen, it pleased God to send his only Son," not only to die for our sins but "to instruct us in the true and only way of becoming holy, that we might be

capable of being happy. This he did in his own person while he continued upon earth; but, being to return to heaven, he gave authority to his apostles and to their successors, to finish the work which he had begun; that is, to preach the gospel to all succeeding generations, that the world might have an opportunity of knowing the good pleasure of God, and what men must do to be saved.

Jesus, speaking to his apostles, said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" that is, in heaven to send down the Holy Ghost to guide you into all truth, and in earth to establish a spiritual kingdom there. "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples to me in all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo,"—that is, let the world take notice of it, "lo, I am with you," I who have all power in heaven and earth, "I am with you" am present with you, in the work of your ministry, both to prosper your labour and to protect your persons, "unto the end of the world," with you, while you live, and with your successors* after your death.

The apostles having received this commission for themselves and their successors, they immediately set about the work of the ministry; declaring to all nations that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world

* All faithful ministers of Christ, all who serve God truly in the work of the Gospel, are successors of the Apostles.—EUSEB.

unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and that he had "committed unto them," and their successors, "the word of reconciliation;" that is, he had committed unto them the preaching of the Gospel, upon the receiving and obeying of which God will be reconciled to mankind. 2 Cor. v. 19.

—WILSON.

Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The great design of the Christian religion is to recover man from the state of corruption into which he is fallen, to a state of perfection, and to retain him in it, until God think fit to call him out of this world to a much better.

Now, this cannot be done, but by the Spirit of God. Neither the law of Moses, nor the law of nature; no, not the state of innocence, was sufficient to direct and secure men from falling, without an especial grace of God. The Jews had a law holy, just, and good; and yet they became a most wicked people. The Gentiles had all the advantages of reasoning and learning, and yet they fell into the most monstrous sins. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans (ch. i. ii.), is forced to put both Jews and Gentiles in mind of this, that he might more effectually recommend the grace of God afforded in the Gospel to all true believers. And, indeed, Jesus Christ did not come into the world until the fulness of time; that is, until the whole world was, or might have been, convinced that there was need of further help to save

them from ruin, and to make them perfect, besides their own free will, their reason, or learning, or the best law that could be given them. And this must be the work of the Holy Ghost alone.

For this end we are dedicated to the Holy Ghost in Baptism, that he may take us under his especial care;—that he may enlighten our understandings with saving knowledge;—that he may subdue our wills to the will of God;—and that he may change our affections from following after vanity, to love those things which are above;—that, being made partakers of a divine nature, God may own us for his children, and, when we die, give us an inheritance with the saints in glory,

In short, this is the great rule of the Gospel, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14. "They that are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. To them, and to them only, belongs the inheritance.—Do not deceive yourselves, or place the new birth in anything but a new life. This is what all the ordinances of God aim at. We are therefore baptised, that, being within the covenant of grace, we may have the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to become new creatures. And if we value Baptism upon any other account, we mistake the end of that ordinance.—WILSON.

In (or rather, into) the name not names, but (one NAME, denoting the unity of the Godhead) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Ghost. Here is a distinct, and most important, mention of the adorable Trinity in Unity, one God in three persons.—EDITOR.

It is wonderful to observe that at the baptism of our Redeemer (ch. iii. 16, 17.) the three infinitely glorious, incomprehensible, Persons were pleased to manifest themselves severally to the very senses of men, to their eyes and ears. For the Father was heard speaking, the Son was seen in the nature of man coming out of the water, and the Holy Spirit was seen in the shape of a dove, descending and lighting upon him. And therefore, we may truly say with St. Augustin, that at this time, "the Trinity appeared most manifestly: the Father in a voice; the Son in a man; the Holy Spirit in a dove." And, with St. Jerome, "the mystery of the Trinity is demonstrated in the baptism of Christ: the Lord is baptized; the Spirit descendeth in the likeness of a dove; the voice of the Father, giving testimony to the son, is heard.—And it is much to be observed that, as all the three divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they manifested themselves at the baptism of our Saviour, so he himself requires that all who would be his disciples should be made so by being baptized in the name of all the same persons. And no man can be initiated into the church of Christ, and so made a Christian, any other way but by being so baptized: this being the only way appointed by Christ himself for that purpose. Our salvation depends upon, and must be attribut-

ed unto, all the three divine persons. For seeing Christ himself hath so ordered it that none can be brought into a state of salvation but by being first baptized in the name of all three, all three must needs be acknowledged to concur in the effecting of it.—BEVERIDGE.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. If the principles of the Christian religion were well rooted in the hearts of all mankind, what excellent fruit would they produce! The earth would put on another face, bearing some resemblance to heaven itself. Idolatry, with all sorts of wickedness and vice, would be everywhere discountenanced and suppressed, for all would worship the one living and true God, and him only. There would be no more wars nor rumours of wars; kingdom would not rise against kingdom, nor nation against nation; but all princes would be at peace with their neighbours, and their subjects at unity among themselves; striving about nothing, but who should serve God best, and do most good in the world. Then piety, and justice, and charity, would revive and flourish again all the world over.—All sorts of people would do all they could to serve and honour God; whether they eat or drink or whatsoever they do, they would "do all to his glory." And, as for their fellow-servants, they would all love as brethren, and every one seek another's good as well as their own; whatsoever they would that men should do to them, they would do the same to all other men. In short,

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 18—20.

all would then deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, and so walk hand in hand together in the narrow way that leads to everlasting life. This would be the happy state of all mankind, if they were but well grounded in that religion which the eternal Son of God hath planted upon earth.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

Ye messengers of Christ,
His sov'reign voice obey ;
Arise, and follow where he leads,
And peace attend your way.

The master whom ye serve
Will needful strength bestow ;
Depending on his promis'd aid,
With sacred courage go.

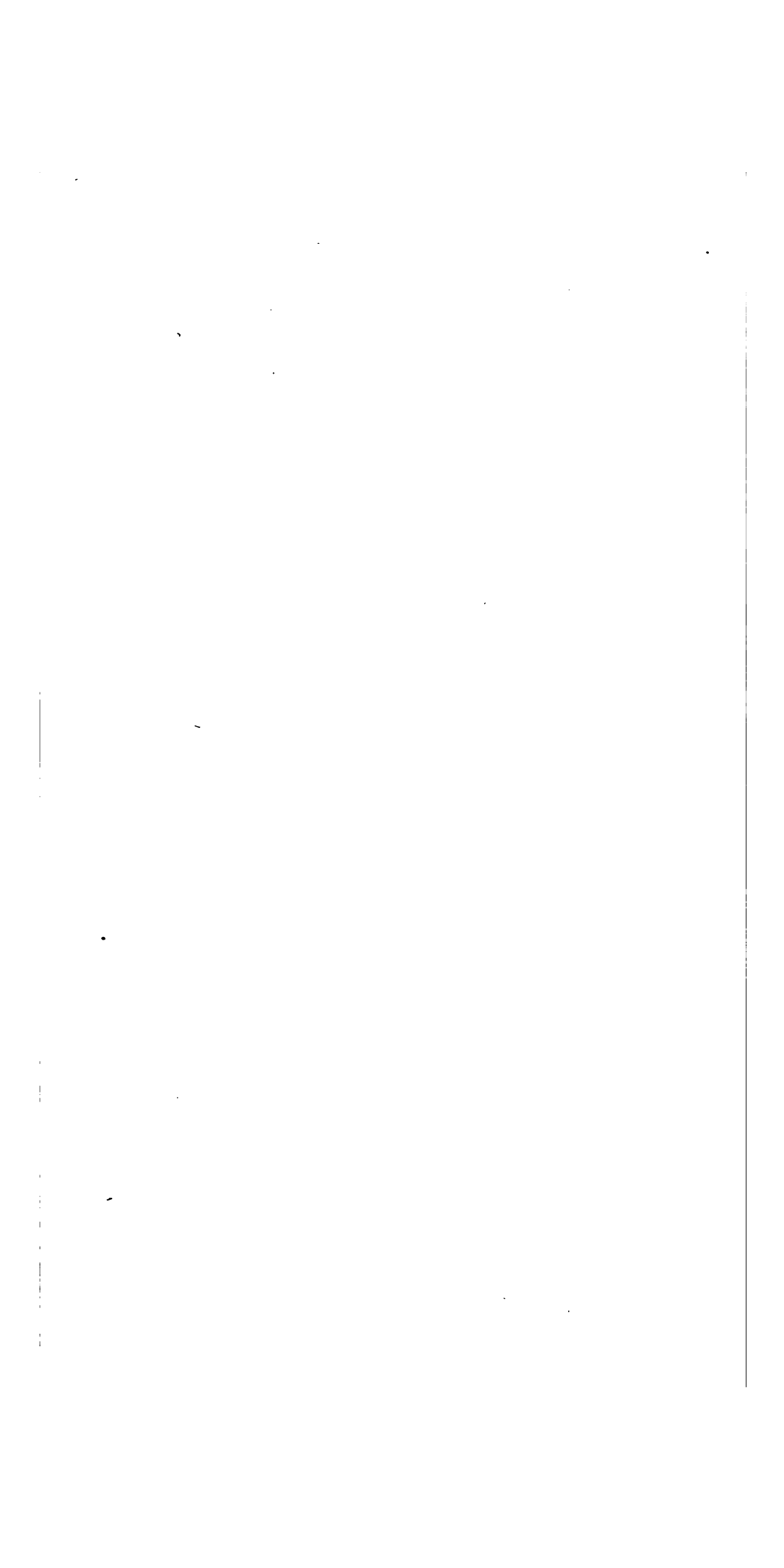
Mountains shall sink to plains,
And hell in vain oppose ;
The cause is God's, and will prevail,
In spite of all his foes.

Go, spread a Saviour's love,
And tell his matchless grace
To the most guilty and deprav'd
Of Adam's num'rous race.

We wish you in his name
In all your work success ;
We pray that he who sends you forth
May all your labours bless.

Vox.

END OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.



THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. MARK.

§ XCVIII.

CHAP. I. 1—11.

The office of John the Baptist. Jesus is baptized.

THE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, 'the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 'John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the bap-

tism of repentance "for the remission of sins.

5 'And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was 'clothed with camels' hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat 'locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, 'There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 'I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall

baptize you ^a with the Holy Ghost.

9 ^a And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 ^m And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens ^{||} opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him :

11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, ["] thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

^a Mat. xiv. 33. Luke i. 35. John i. 34. ^b Mal. iii. 1. Mat. xi. 10. Luke vii. 27. ^c Is. xl. 3. Mat. iii. 3. Luke iii. 4. John i. 15, 28. ^d Mat. iii. 1. Luke iii. 3. John iii. 23. ^e Or. *unto*. ^f Mat. iii. 5. ^g Mat. iii. 4. ^h Lev. xi. 22. ⁱ Mat. iii. xi. John i. 27. Acts xiii. 25. ^j Lev. i. 5; & xi. 16; & xix. 4. ^k Is. xlv. 3. Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 4; & x. 45; & xi. 15, 16. 1 Cor. xii. 13. A. D. 27. ^l Mat. iii. 13. Luke iii. 21. ^m Mat. iii. 16. John i. 32. ⁿ Or. *eleven*, or, *rent*. ^o Ps. li. 7. Mat. iii. 17. ch. ix. 7.

*—See § X.

Matthew III. 1—12.

And § XI.

Matthew III. 13—17.

* In order to avoid repetition, and that the size of the whole work may be kept within moderate limits, all passages of this and the following Gospels which are parallel, or nearly so, to any leading portions of the foregoing Evangelist, will be printed in suitable divisions, and with marginal references, but without the addition of a Commentary. The Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke will thus be comprised in a very small compass; while that of St. John, containing much additional matter, will furnish occasion for profitable reflection, in addition to that which has already arisen.

§ XCIX.

CHAP. I. 11—22.

Jesus is tempted. He preacheth. Call-eth Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

12 ^o And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; ^p and the angels ministered unto him.

14 ^q Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, ^r preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, ^s The time is fulfilled, and ^t the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16 ^u Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway ^v they forsook their nets, and followed him.

19 ^w And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ships mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21 And they went into Capernaum: and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught.

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

o Mat. iv. 1. Luke iv. 1. p Mat. iv. 11. A. D. 80, ending. q Mat. iv. 12. r Mat. iv. 23. s Dan. ix. 25. Gal. iv. 4. Eph. i. 10. t Mat. iii. 2; & iv. 17. u Mat. iv. 18. Luke v. 4. v Mat. xix. 27. Luke v. 11. w Mat. iv. 21. A. D. 81. x Mat. iv. 18. Luke iv. 13. y Mat. vii. 28.

See § XII.

Matthew IV. 1—11.

And § XIII.

Matthew IV. 12—25.

§ C.

CHAP. I. 23—34.

Christ healeth one that had a devil; Peter's mother in law; and many diseased persons.

23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus rebuked him,

saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that

were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and ^a suffered not the devils ¹ to speak, because they knew him.

^Δ Luke iv. 38.—^c Mat. viii. 29.—^d ver. 34.—^e ch. ix. 20.
^f Mat. viii. 14. Luke iv. 38.—^g Mat. viii. 16. Luke iv.
40.—^A ch. iii. 12. Luke iv. 41. See Acts xvi. 17, 18.
^{||} Or, to say that they knew him.

The leading features of the history of the poor demoniac,—namely, the sufferings to which he had been exposed, and the recognition of Christ by the evil spirit, and the ejection of that spirit by his divine power,—bear a strong resemblance to those of the miracle performed in the country of the Gergesenes, recorded in Matt. viii. 28—34, and in the fifth chapter of this Gospel.

See § XXX.

Matthew VIII. 28—34.

And § XXIX.

Matthew VIII. 14—17.

§ CI.

CHAP. I. 35—45.

Christ preacheth in Galilee; and cleanseth the leper.

35 And ¹ in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

37 And when they had found

him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them, ^Δ Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for ¹ therefore came I forth.

39 ^Δ And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40 ^Δ And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things ^Δ which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 ^Δ But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the

city but was without in desert places: ^c and they came to him from every quarter.

† Luke iv. 42.—‡ Luke iv. 43. // †a lxi 1.—John xvi. 28; & xvii. 4.—¶ Mat. iv. 23. Luke iv. 44.—* Mat. viii 2.—Luke v. 12.—• Lev. xiv. 3, 4, 10. Luke v, 14.—→ Luke v. 13.—q ch. ii. 13.

See § XIII.

Matthew IV. 23—35.

And § XXVIII.

Matthew VIII. 1—4.

§ CII.

CHAP. II. 1—17.

Christ healeth one sick of the palsy ; calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom ; and eateth with publicans and sinners.

AND again ^a he entered into Capernaum after *some* days ; and it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door : and he preached the word unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was : and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies ? ^b who can forgive sins but God only ?

8 And immediately ^c when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts ?

9 ^d Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee : or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk ?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all ; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

13 ^e And he went forth again by the sea side ; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 ^f And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alphæus sitting ^g at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 ^h And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, ⁱ They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

^a Mat. ix. 1. Luke v. 18.—^b Job xiv. 4. Is. xliii. 25.
—^c Mat. ix. 4.—^d Mat. ix. 5.—^e Mat. ix. 9.—^f Mat. ix. 9.
Luke v. 27.—^g Or, at the place where the custom was received.—^h Mat. ix. 10.—ⁱ Mat. ix. 12, 13; & xviii, 11.
Luke v. 31, 32; & xix. 10. 1 Tim. i. 15.

See § XXXI.

Matthew IX. 1—13.

§ CIII.

CHAP. II. 18—28.

Christ excuseth his disciples for not fasting; and for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day.

18 ⁱ And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast; and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

21 No man also seweth a piece of ^j new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

23 ^k And it came to pass,

that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day ; and his disciples began, as they went, 'to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful.

25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read ^m what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him ?

26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, ⁿ which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him ?

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath :

28 Therefore ^o the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

ⁱ Mat. ix. 14. Luke v. 33.—[Or, *reer*, or, *unsought*.
—^k Mat. xii. 1. Luke vi. 1.—^l Dent. xxiii. 25.—^m 1 Sam. xxi. 6.—ⁿ Ex. xxix. 32, 33. Lev. xxiv. 9.—^o Mat. xii. 8.

See § XXXII.

Matthew IX. 14—17.

And § XL.

Matthew XII. 1—8.

§ CIV.

CHAP. III. 1—12.

Christ healeth the withered hand, and many other infirmities. He rebuketh the unclean spirits.

AND ^a he entered again into the synagogue ; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day ; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, [†] Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil ? to save life or to kill ? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the [‡] hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out : and his hand was restored whole as the other.

6 [§] And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with [¶] the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea : and a great multitude from

ST. MARK III. 13—21.

Galilee followed him, ' and from Judæa.

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and *from* beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they 'pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 'And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, 'Thou art the Son of God.

12 And 'he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

a Mat. xii. 9. Luke vi. 6. † Or, *Arise*, stand forth in the midst. † Or, *blindness*. b Mat. xii. 14.—c Mat. xxii. 16.—d Luke vi. 17.—|| Or, *rushed*.—e ch. i. 23, 24. Luke iv. 41.—f Mat. xiv. 23. ch. i. 1.—g ch. i. 23, 24. Mat. xii. 16.

See § § XL. XLI.

Matthew XII. 9—16.

§ CV.

CHAP. III. 13—21.

Christ chooseth his twelve Apostles.

13 ^a And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him*

414

whom he would: and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

16 And Simon 'he surnamed Peter;

17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite.

19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went 'into an house.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And when his 'friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: 'for they said, He is beside himself.

A Mat. x. 1. Luke vi. 12; & ix. 1.—d John i. 42.—|| Or, *come*.—k ch. vi. 31.—|| Or, *kinsmen*.—l John vii. 8; & x. 20.

See § XXXIV.

Matthew X. 1—8.

§ CVI.

CHAP. III. 22—35.

Christ convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub; and sheweth who are his brother, and sister, and mother.

22 ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, " He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 " And he calleth them *unto him*, and he said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand,

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 ° No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

28 ° Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

29 But he that shall blas-

pheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

31 ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

as Mat. ix. 34; & x. 25. Luke xi. 15. John vii. 30; & viii. 48, 52; & x. 22.—a Mat. xii. 25.—o Is. xlix. 24. Mat. xii. 29.—p Mat. xii. 31. Luke xii. 10. 1 John v. 16.—q Mat. xii. 46. Luke viii. 19.

See § XLII.

Matthew XII. 24—32.

And § XLIII.

Matthew XII. 46—50.

§ CVII.

CHAP. IV. 1—20.

The parable of the sower and the meaning thereof.

AND " he began again to teach by the sea side : and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea ; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, ' and said unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken ; Behold, there went out a sower to sow :

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth ; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth ;

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched ; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased ;

and brought forth some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 ' And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

11 And he said unto them, Unto you is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God : but unto ' them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables :

12 ' That seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable ? and how then will ye know all parables ?

14 ' The sower soweth the word.

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown ; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground ; who, when they have

heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness ;

17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time : afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And these are they which are sown among thorns ; such as hear the word,

19 And the cares of this world, ^a and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground ; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

^a Mat. xiii. 1. Luke viii. 4.—^b ch. xii. 38.—^c John xv. 4. Col. i. 6.—^d Mat. xiii. 10. Luke viii. 9, &c.—^e 1 Cor. v. 12. Col. iv. 5. 1 Thes. iv. 12. 1 Tim. iii. 7.—^f Is. vi. 9. Mat. xiii. 14. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 20. Rom. xi. 8.—^g Mat. xiii. 19.—^h 1 Tim. vi. 9, 17.

See § XLIV.

Matthew XIII. 1—18.

§ CVIII.

CHAP. IV. 21—34.

We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others. The parable of the seed growing secretly ; and of the mustard seed.

21 ¶ 'And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to

3 G

be put under a bushel, or under a bed ? and not to be set on a candlestick ?

22 ^a For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested ; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23 ^b If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear : ^c with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you : and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25 ^d For he that hath, to him shall be given : and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

26 ¶ And he said, ^e So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ;

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself : first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately ^f he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 ¶ And he said, ^g Where-

417

unto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

33 'And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*.

34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone he expounded all things to his disciples.

f Mat. v. 15. Luke viii. 16; & xi. 33.—j The word in the original signifieth a less measure, as Mat. v. 15.—k Mat. x. 26. Luke xii. 2.—l Mat. xi. 15. ver. 9.—m Mat. vii. 2. Luke vi. 38.—n Mat. xiii. 12; & xv. 29. Luke xviii. 18; & xix. 28.—o Mat. xiii. 24.—p Or, ripe.—q Rev. xiv. 16.—r Mat. xiii. 31. Luke xiii. 18. Acts ii. 41; & iv. 4; & v. 14; & xix. 20.—s Mat. xiii. 34. John xvi. 12.

See § XLV.

Matthew XIII. 24—43.

(See also Matthew V. 15; X. 26; XXV. 29.)

§ CIX.

CHAP. IV. 35—41.

Christ stilleth the tempest on the sea.

35 'And the same day, when the even was come, he saith
418

unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?

t Mat. viii. 18, 23. Luke viii. 22.

See § XXX.

Matthew VIII. 23—27.

§ CX.

CHAP. V. 1—20.

Christ delivering the possessed of the legion of devils, they enter into the swine.

AND "they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.

3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains :

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken to pieces : neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him.

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, Come

out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.

9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion : for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine : and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand); and were choked in the sea.

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind : and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the

devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17 And ^b they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

18 And when he was come into the ship, ^a he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him : and all *men* did marvel.

^a Mat. viii. 26. Luke viii. 26.—^b Mat. viii. 24. Acts xvi. 29.—^c Luke viii. 28.

See § XXX.

Matthew VIII. 28—34.

§ CXI.

CHAP. V. 21—43.

Christ healeth the woman of the bloody issue ; and raiseth from death Jairus his daughter.

21 ^a And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him : and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 ^a And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name ; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death ; *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed ; and she shall live.

24 And *Jesus* went with him ; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman, ^c which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up ; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that ^a virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes ?

ST. MARK VI. 1—6.

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why

make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead but sleepeth,

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

d Mat. ix. 1. Luke viii. 40.—e Mat. ix. 18. Luke viii. 41.—f Lev. xv. 25. Mat. ix. 20.—g Luke vi. 19; & viii. 46.—h Mat. ix. 22; ch. x. 52. Acts xiv. 9.—i Luke viii. 49.—k John xi. 11.—l Acts ix. 40.—m Mat. viii. 4; & ix. 30; & xii. 16. & xvii. 9. ch. iii. 12. Luke v. 14.

See § XXXII.

Matthew IX. 18—26.

§ CXII.

CHAP. VI. 1—6.

Christ is contemned of his countrymen.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country;

and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, 'From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, 'the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they 'were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said unto them, 'A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 'And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.

6 And 'he marvelled because of their unbelief. 'And he went round about the villages, teaching.

' Mat. xiii. 54. Luke iv. 16.—' John vi. 42.—c See Mat. xii. 46. Gal. i. 19.—d Mat. xi. 6.—e Mat. xiii. 67. John iv. 44.—f See Gen. xix. 23; & xxxii. 28. Mat. xiii. 58. ch. ix. 28.—g Is. lix. 16.—h Mat. ix. 75. Luke xiii. 22.

See § XLVI.

Matthew XIII. 53—58.

§ CXIII.

CHAP. VI. 7—13.

Christ giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits.

7 ¶ 'And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no 'money in *their* purse:

9 But 'be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10 'And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, "shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom 'and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, 'and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

ST. MARK VI. 14—29.

† Mat. x. 1. ch. III. 13. 14. Luke ix. 1. || The word signifies a piece of brass money, its value somewhat less than a farthing. Mat. x. 9. but here it is taken in general for money. Luke ix. 8.—& Acts xii. 8.—† Mat. x. 11. Luke ix. 4; & x. 7, 8.—^m Mat. x. 14. Luke x. 10.—ⁿ Acts xiii. 51; & xviii. 6. † Gr. or.—^o James v. 14.

See § XXXIV.

Matthew X. 1—15.

§ CXIV.

CHAP. VI. 14—29.

Divers opinions of Christ. John Baptist is beheaded and buried.

14 ' And king Herod heard of *him*; (for his name was spread abroad :) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

15 ' Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 ' But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

18 For John had said unto Herod, ' It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had

' a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and ' observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21 " And when a convenient day was come, that " Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee;

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

23 And he sware unto her, ' Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straight-way with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26 " And the king was exceeding sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes

which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And immediately the king sent ^h an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought : and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel : and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

^p Mat. xiv. 1. Luke ix. 7.—^q Mat. xvi. 14. ch. viii. 26.—^r Mat. xiv. 2. Luke iii. 19.—^s Lev. xviii. 16; & xx. 21.—^t Or, an inward grudge.—^u Mat. xiv. 6; & xxi. 6.—^v Or, kept him, or, saved him.—^w Mat. xiv. 6.—^x Gen. xi. 20.—^y Ezech. v. 3, 4; vii. 2.—^z Mat. xiv. 9.—^{aa} Or, one of his guard.

See § XLVII.

Matthew XIV. 1—12.

§ CXV.

CHAP. VI. 30—44.

*The Apostles return from preaching.
The miracle of five loaves and two fishes.*

30 ^a And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 ^b And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for ^c there were many

coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 ^d And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34 ^e And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and ^f he began to teach them many things.

35 ^g And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time ^h is far passed:

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, ⁱ Shall we go and buy two hundred ^j pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew,

they say, ' Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

a Luke ix. 10.—b Mat. xiv. 13.—c ch. iii. 20.—d Mat. xiv. 13.—e Mat. ix. 36; & xiv. 14.—f Luke ix. 11.—g Mat. xiv. 13. Luke ix. 12.—h Num. xi. 13, 22. 2 Kings iv. 43.—i The Roman penny is sevenpence halfpenny; as Mat. xviii. 28.—j Mat. xiv. 17; Luke ix. 13. John vi. 9. See Mat. xv. 34. ch. viii. 5.—k 1 Sam. ix. 13. Mat. xxvi. 26.

See § XLVIII.

Matthew XIV. 13—21.

§ CXVI.

CHAP. VI. 45—56.

Christ walketh on the sea; and healeth all that touch him.

45 ' And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other

3 H

side before ^h unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

47 ⁱ And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and ^j would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; he not afraid.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves, beyond measure and wondered.

52 For ^k they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their ^l heart was hardened.

53 ^m And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come

out of the ship, straightway they knew him.

55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

1 Mat. xiv. 22. John vi. 17.—|| Or, over against Bethesda.—m Mat. xiv. 23. John vi. 16, 17.—n See Luke xiv. 28.—o ch. viii. 17, 18.—p ch. iii. 5; & xvi. 14.—q Mat. xiv. 34.—r Mat ix. 20. ch. v. 27, 28. Acts xix. 12.—| Or, it.

See § XLIX.

Matthew XIV. 22—36.

§ CXVII.

CHAP. VII. 1—23.

The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashen hands. They break the commandment of God by the traditions of men. Meat defileth not the man.

THEN came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with

426

unwashen, hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

ST. MARK VII. 1—23.

10 For Moses said, 'Honour thy father and thy mother; and, 'Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is 'Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.*

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14 ¶ ' And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Harken unto me every one *of you*, and understand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 ' If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 ' And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive,

that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 ' For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, ' covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

a Mat. xv. 1.—† Or, common.—‡ Or, diligently: in the original, with the fist: Theophylact, up to the elbow.—‡ Or, beds.—‡ Mat. xv. 2.—c Is. xxix. 18. Mat. xv. 8.—‡ Or, frustrate.—‡ Ex. xx. 12. Dent. v. 16. Mat. xv. 4.—c Ex. xxi. 17. Lev. xx. 9. Prov. xx. 20.—f Mat. xv. 5; & xxiii. 18.—g Mat. xv. 10.—h Mat. xi. 15.—i Mat. xv. 15.—h Gen. vi. 5; & viii. 21. Mat. xv. 19.—† Gr. covetousnesses, wickednesses.

See § L.

Matthew XV. 1—20.

§ CXVIII.

CHAP. VII. 24—37.

Christ healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit; and one that was deaf and stammered in his speech.

24 ¶ ' And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid.

25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26 The woman was a ¹ Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the
428

devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31 ¶ " And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32 And * they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and ° he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And ' looking up to heaven, ° he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 ° And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And ° he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

¹ Mat. xv. 21.—² Or, *Gentile*.—³ Mat. xv. 29.—⁴ Mat. ix. 32. Luke xi. 14.—⁵ ch. viii. 23. John ix. 6.—⁶ ch. vi. 41. John xi. 41; & xvii. 1.—⁷ John xi. 33, 36.—⁸ 1. xxxv. 5, 6. Mat. xi. 5.—⁹ ch. v. 43.

ST. MARK VIII. 1—10.

See § LI.

Matthew XV. 21—28.

See also, in § XXXIII,

Matthew IX. 32—33.

§ CXIX.

CHAP. VIII. 1—10.

Christ feedeth the people miraculously.

IN those days 'the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days and have nothing to eat :

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way : for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness ?

5 ' And he asked them, How many loaves have ye ? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground : and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them* ; and they

did set *them* before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes : and ' he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8 So they did eat, and were filled : and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand : and he sent them away.

10 ¶ And ' straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came unto the parts of Dalmanutha.

a Mat. xv. 32.—b Mat. xv. 34. See ch. vi. 38—c Mat. xiv. 19. ch. vi. 41.—d Mat. xv. 39.

See § LII.

Matthew XV. 32—39.

§ CXX.

CHAP. VIII. 11—26.

Christ refuseth to give a sign to the Pharisees ; admonisheth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees ; and of the leaven of Herod ; giveth a blind man his sight.

11 ' And the Pharisees came forth and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign ? verily I say unto you,

There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 ¶ Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them How is it that ye do not understand?

22 ¶ And he cometh to

Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

e Mat. xli. 28; & xvi. 1. John vi. 30.—f Mat. xvi. 5—g Mat. xvi. 6. Luke xii. 1.—h Mat. xvi. 7.—i ch. vi. 52.—k Mat. xiv. 20. ch. vi. 43. Luke ix. 17. John vi. 12.—l Mat. xv. 37. ver. 8.—m ch. vi. 52. ver. 17.—n ch. vii. 28.—o Mat. viii. 4. ch. v. 43.

See § LIII.

Matthew XIV. 1—12.

See also Matthew XV. 30.

§ CXXI.

CHAP. VIII. 27—38.

Jesus acknowledgeth that he is the Christ who should suffer and rise again; and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the Gospel.

27 ¶ And Jesus went out and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by

ST. MARK IX. 1—18.

the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am ?

28 And they answered, 'John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am ? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, 'Thou art the Christ.

30 'And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 And 'he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 ¶ And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, 'Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For 'whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?

38 'Whosoever therefore 'shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

p Mat. xvi. 18. Luke ix. 18.—q Mat. xiv. 2.—r Mat. xvi. 6. John vi. 69; & xi. 27.—s Mat. xvi. 20.—t Mat. xvi. 21; & xvii. 22. Luke ix. 22.—u Mat. x. 38; & xvi. 24. Luke ix. 23; & xiv. 27.—v John xii. 23.—w Mat. x. 33. Luke ix. 23; & xii. 9.—x See Rom. i. 16. 2 Tim. i. 8; ii. 12.

See § § LIV. LV.

Matthew XVI. 13—28.

§ CXXII.

CHAP. IX. 1—13.

Jesus is transfigured. He instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias.

AND he said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen 'the kingdom of God come with power.

2 ¶ 'And after six days

Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves : and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding "white as snow ; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses : and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say ; for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them : and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son : hear him.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, question-

ing one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

11 ¶ And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come ?

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things ; and " how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and " be set at nought.

13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

e Mat. xvi. 28. Luke ix. 27.—f Mat. xxiv. 30; & xxv. 31. Luke xxii. 19.—g Mat. xvii. 1. Luke ix. 29.—h Dan. vii. 9. Mat. xxviii. 3.—i Mat. xvii. 9.—j Mat. iv. 8. Mat. xvii. 10.—k Ps. xxii. 6. Is. liii. 2, &c. Dan. ix. 26.—l Luke xxiii. 11. Phil. ii. 7.—m Mat. xi. 14; & xvii. 12.

See § LVI.

Matthæw XVII. 1—13.

§ CXXIII.

CHAP. IX. 14—32.

Jesus casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit ; foretelleth his death and resurrection.

14 ¶ And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him,

were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye ^{ll} with them?

17 And ^lone of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he ^lteareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and ^mwhen he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, "If

thou canst believe, all things, *are* possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26 And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 ^o And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

30 ¶ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*.

31 ^p For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered

into the hands of men, and they shall kill him ; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

℥ Mat. xvii. 14. Luke ix. 37.—1 Or, among yourselves! —1 Mat. xvii. 14. Luke ix. 38.—1 Or, dasheth him.—m ch. i. 28. Luke ix. 42.—s Mat. xvii. 20. ch. xi. 23. Luke xvii. 6. John xi. 40.—o Mat. xvii. 19.—p Mat. xvii. 22. Luke ix. 44.

See § LVII.

Matthew XVII. 14—23.

§ CXXIV.

CHAP. IX. 33—50.

Jesus exhorteth his disciples to humility ; bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offence to any of the faithful.

33 ¶ And he came to Capernaum : and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way ?

34 But they held their peace : for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, ' If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36 And ' he took a child, and set him in the midst of

them : and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me : and ' whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38 ¶ And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us : and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, forbid him not : ' for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For ' he that is not against us is on our part.

41 ' For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

42 ' And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 ' And if thy hand ^h offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go

ST. MARK X. 1—16.

into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ;

44 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched :

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out : it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire :

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 'Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it ? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

¶ Mat. xviii. 1. Luke ix. 46; & xxii. 24.—r Mat. xx. 26, 27. ch. x. 48.—s Mat. xviii. 2. ch. x. 16.—t Mat. x. 40. Luke ix. 45.—u Num. xi. 23. Luke ix. 49.—v 1 Cor. xii. 3.—w See Mat. xii. 30.—x Mat. x. 42.—y Mat. xviii. 6. Luke xvii. 1.—z Dent. xiii. 6. Mat. v. 29; & xviii. 8.—j Or, cause thee to offend : and so ver. 45, 47.—k Is. lxvi. 24. Judith xvi. 17.—l Or, cause thee to offend.—m Lev. ii. 13. Ezek. xliii. 24.—n Mat. v. 13. Luke xiv. 34.—o Eph. iv. 26. Col. iv. 6.—p Rom. xii. 18; & xiv. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Heb. xii. 14.

See § LVIII.

Matthew XVIII. 1—14.

§ CXXV.

CHAP. X. 1—16.

Christ disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorcement; blesseth the children that are brought unto him.

AND ' he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judæa, by the farther side of Jordan : and the people resort unto him again ; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 ¶ ' And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife ? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you ?

4 And they said, ' Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

6 But from the beginning of the creation ' God made them male and female.

7 ' For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife ;

8 And they twain shall be one flesh : so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What God therefore hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

11 And he saith unto them, ^f Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13 ¶ ^g And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them : and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for ^h of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, ⁱ Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

^a Mat. xix. 1. John x. 40; & xi. 7.—^b Mat. xix. 3.—^c Deut. xxiv. 1. Mat. v. 31; & xix. 7.—^d Gen. i. 27; & v. 2.—^e Gen. ii. 24. 1 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. v. 31.—^f Mat. v. 32; & xix. 9. Luke xvi. 18. Rom. vii. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.—^g Mat. xix. 13. Luke xviii. 15.—^h 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 1 Peter ii. 2.—ⁱ Mat. xviii. 3.

See § LXI.

Matthew XIX. 1—15.

§ CXXVI.

CHAP. X. 17—31.

Christ resolveth a rich man how he may inherit life everlasting; telleth his disciples of the danger of riches; promiseth rewards to them that forsake any thing for the Gospel.

17 ¶ ^a And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God.*

19 Thou knowest the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered, and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest : go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have ^b treasure in heaven;

and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ " And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God!

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

28 ¶ " Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife,

or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

30 " But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 " But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

k Mat. xix. 16. Luke xviii. 18.—l Ex. xx. Rom. xiii. 9.—m Mat. vi. 19, 20; & xix. 21. Luke xii. 33; & xvi. 9.—n Mat. xix. 23. Luke xviii. 24.—o Job. xxxi. 24. Ps. lli. 7; & lxi. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17.—p Jer. xxxii. 17. Mat. xix. 28. Luke i. 87.—q Mat. xix. 27. Luke xviii. 28.—r 2 Chr. xxv. 9. Luke xviii. 30.—s Mat. xix. 30; & xx. 16. Luke xiii. 30.

See § LXII.

Matthew XIX. 16—30.

§ CXXVII.

CHAP. X. 32—45.

Christ foretelleth his death and resurrection; biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with him.

32 ¶ " And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid.

" And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

33 *Saying,* Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him : and the third day he shall rise again.

35 ¶ * And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What will ye that I should do for you ?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask : Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of ? and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with ?

39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of ; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized :

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give ; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

41 * And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much dis-

pleased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them to *him* and saith unto them, * Ye know that they which [†] are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 * But so shall it not be among you : but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister :

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even [‡] the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to [§] give his life a ransom for many.

† Mat. xx. 17. Luke xviii. 31.—‡ ch. viii. 31; & ix. 31. Luke ix. 32; & xviii. 31.—§ Mat. xx. 20.—¶ Mat. xi. 24.—‡ Luke xxii. 26.—| Or, *think good*.—§ Mat. xx. 26, 28. ch. ix. 36. Luke ix. 46.—‡ John xiii. 14. Phil. ii. 7.—¶ Mat. xx. 28. | Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14.

See § LXIV.

Matthew XX. 17—28.

§ CXXVIII.

CHAP. X. 46—52.

Christ restoreth to Bartimæus his sight.

46 ¶ * And they came to Jericho : and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging.

47 And when he heard that

it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus *thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

50 And he casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

d Mat. xx. 29. Luke xviii. 35.—e Mat. ix. 22. ch. v. 34. | Or, *stood there.*

See § LXV.

Matthew XX. 29—34.

§ CXXIX.

CHAP. XI. 1—11.

Christ rideth with triumph into Jerusalem.

AND ^a when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose *him*.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon *him*.

8 ^o And many spread their garments in the way : and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, ^o Hosanna ; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord :

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord : ^o Hosanna in the highest.

11 ^o And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple : and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

^a Mat. xxi. 1. Luke xix. 29. John xii. 14.—^b Mat. xxi. 8.—^c Psalm cxviii. 26.—^d Psalm cxviii. 1.—^e Mat. xxi. 12.

See § LXVI.

Matthew XXI. 1—11.

§ CXXX.

CHAP. XI. 12—26.

Christ curseth the fruitless leafy tree ; purgeth the temple ; exhorteth his disciples to steadfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies.

12 ¶ ^o And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry :

440

13 ^o And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon : and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves ; for the time of figs was not *yet*.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it*.

15 ¶ ^o And they come to Jerusalem : and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves ;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, 'My house shall be called 'of all nations the house of prayer ? but ^o ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And ' the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him : for they feared him, because ^o all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 ¶ ^o And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw

the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, 'Have faith in God.

23 For 'verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

25 And when ye stand praying, 'forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But 'if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

f Mat. xxi. 18.—g Mat. xxi. 19.—h Mat. xxi. 12. Luke xix. 46. John ii. 14.—i Is. lvi. 7. | Or, an house of prayer for all nations.—k Jer. vii. 11.—l Mat. xxi. 46, 46. Luke xix. 47.—m Mat. vii. 28. ch. i. 22. Luke iv. 32.—n Mat. xxi. 19. | Or, Have the faith of God.—o Mat. xvii. 20; h xxi. 21. Luke xvii. 6.—p Mat. vii. 7. Luke xi. 9. John xiv. 13; h xv. 7; xvi. 24. Jam. i. 5, 6.—q Mat. vi. 14. Col. iii. 13.—r Mat. xviii. 35.

See § LXVII.

Matthew XXI. 12—22.

§ CXXXI.

CHAP. XI. 27—33.

Christ defendeth the lawfulness of his actions, by the witness of John, who was a man sent of God.

27 ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: 'and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.

28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people:

ST. MARK XII. 1—12.

for ' all *men* counted John that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Mat. xxi. 23. Luke xx. 1. Or, thing.—Mat. iii. 6 & xiv. 5. ch. vi. 20.

See § LXVIII,
Matthew XXI. 23—32.

§ CXXXII.

CHAP. XII. 1—12.

In a parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, Christ foresheweth the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles.

AND ^a he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

4 And again he sent unto

them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be our's.

8 And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this scripture; ^a The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 ^a And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

ST. MARK XII. 13—27.

e Mat. xxi. 38. Luke xxii. 9.—d Psalm cxviii. 22.—
c Mat. xxi. 45, 46. ch. xi. 16. John vii. 25, 30, 44.

See § LXIX.

Matthew XXI. 33—46.

§ CXXXIII.

CHAP. XII. 13—27.

Christ avoideth the snare of the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæsar: convinceth the error of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection.

13 ¶ “ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.

16 And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's.

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar

the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

18 ¶ ‘ Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind* him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but ^aare as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead,

that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, 'I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

d Mat. xxii. 15. Luke xx. 20. # Valuing of our money sevenpence halfpenny, as Mat. xviii. 23.—e Mat. xxii. 23. Luke xx. 27.—f Acts xxiii. 8.—g Deut. xv. 5.—h 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.—i Ex. iii. 6.

See § LXXI.

Matthew XXII. 15—33.

§ CXXXIV.

CHAP. XII. 28—37.

Christ resolveth the scribe, who questioned of the first commandment: refuteth the opinion that the scribes held of Christ.

28 ¶ ^a And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is* 'Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

444

31 And the second *is* like, *namely* this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; " and there is none other but he: .

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, ' is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. ' And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

35 ¶ ' And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

36 For David himself said ' by the Holy Ghost, ' The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

a Mat. xxii. 35.—b Deut. vi. 4. Luke x. 27.—c Lev. xix. 18. Mat. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14. Jam. ii. 8.—d Den. iv. 39. Is. xiv. 6, 14; Is. xlv. 9.—e 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hos. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 6.—f Mat. xxii. 41.—g Mat. xxii. 41. Luke xx. 41.—h 2 Sam. xiii. 2.—i Ps. cx. 1.

See § LXXII.

Matthew XXII. 34—46.

§ CXXXV.

CHAP. XII. 38—44.

Christ bids the people to beware of the ambition and hypocrisy of the scribes ; and commendeth the poor widow for her two mites above all.

38 ¶ And 'he said unto them in his doctrine, " Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and " love salutations in the market-places,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts :

40 ' Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers : these shall receive the greater damnation.

41 ¶ " And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast " money ' into the treasury : and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two " mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ' this poor widow hath cast more in than all they

which have cast into the treasury :

44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance ; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, ' *even* all her living.

f ch. iv. 2.—g Mat. xxiii. 1, &c. Luke xx. 46.—h Luke xi. 43.—i Mat. xxiii. 14.—j Luke xxi. 1. ¶ A piece of brass money : See Mat. x.; 9.—k 2 Kings xii. 9. ¶ It is the seventh part of one piece of that brass money.—l 2 Cor. viii. 12.—m Deut. xxiv. 6. ¶ John iii. 17.

See § § LXXIII. LXXIV.

Matthew XXIII. 1—26.

The narrative of the poor widow is related only by St. Mark and St. Luke. Concerning the giving of alms, see Matthew vi. 1—4., in § XVIII.

§ CXXXVI.

CHAP. XIII. 1—23.

Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple : the persecutions for the Gospel : that the Gospel must be preached to all nations : that great calamities shall happen to the Jews.

AND " as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here* !

2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings ? ' there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James

and John and Andrew asked him privately,

4 'Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

5 And Jesus answering them began to say, 'Take heed lest any *man* deceive you :

6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many.

7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet.

8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: 'these are the beginnings of ¹¹ sorrows.

9 ¶ But ¹² take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

10 And 'the gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 'But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither

do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, 'but the Holy Ghost.

12 Now 'the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13 'And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but ¹⁴ he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 ¶ 'But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, 'spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then 'let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains:

15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house:

16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 'But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 'For ~~in~~ those days shall

be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 'And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not:

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

23 But 'take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

a Mat. xxiv. 1. Luke xxi. 5.—b Luke xix. 44.—c Mat. xxiv. 3. Luke xxi. 7.—d Jer. xxix. 8. Eph. v. 6. 1 Thess. B. 3.—e Mat. xxiv. 8.—f The word in the original importeth the pains of a woman in travail.—g Mat. x. 17. 18; & xxiv. 9. Rev. vi. 10.—h Mat. xxiv. 14.—i Mat. x. 19. Luke xii. 11; & xxi. 14.—j Acts ii. 4; & iv. 8, 31.—k Mic. vii. 6. Mat. x. 21; & xxiv. 10. Luke xxi. 16.—l Mat. xxiv. 9. Luke xxi. 17.—m Dan. xii. 12. Mat. x. 22; & xxiv. 13. Rev. ii. 10.—n Mat. xxiv. 15.—o Dan. ix. 27.—p Luke xxi. 31.—q Luke xxi. 32; & xxiii. 29.—r Dan. ix. 26; & xii. 1. Joel ii. 2. Mat. xxiv. 21.—s Mat. xxiv. 23. Luke xvii. 23; & xxi. 8.—t 2 Pet. iii. 17.

See § LXXVI.

Matthew XXIV. 1—28.

§ CXXXVII.

CHAP. XIII. 24—37.

Christ foretelleth the manner of his coming to judgment: the hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that he be not found unprovided, when he cometh to each one particularly by death.

24 " But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26 " And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

28 ' Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know not that it is nigh, even at the doors.

30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but ^a my words shall not pass away,

32 ¶ But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

33 ^a Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

34 ^b For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35 ^c Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

^a Dan. vii. 10. Zeph. i. 15. Mat. xxiv. 29, &c. Luke xxi. 28.—^b Dan. vii. 13, 14. Mat. xvi. 27; & xxiv. 30. ch. xiv. 62. Acts i. 11. 1 Thea. iv. 16. 2 Thea. i. 7, 10. Rev. i. 7.—^c Mat. xxiv. 32. Luke xxi. 29, &c.—^d vs. xi. 8.—^e Mat. xxiv. 42; & xxv. 13. Luke xxi. 40; & xxi. 34. Rom. xiii. 11. 1 Thea. v. 6.—^f Mat. xxiv. 43; & xxv. 14.—^g Mat. xxiv. 43, 44.

See § LXXVII.

Matthew XXIV. 29—35.

§ CXXXVIII.

CHAP. XIV. 1—11.

A conspiracy against Christ. Precious ointment is poured on his head by a woman. Judas selleth his master for money.

AFTER ^a two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

2 But they said, not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

3 ¶ ^b And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of ^c spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head.

4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred ^d pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ^e ye have the poor with you always, and when-

soever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

10 ¶ And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

e Mat. xxvi. 2. Luke xxii. 1. John xi. 55: & xiii. 1.—
f Mat. xxvi. 8. John xii. 1, 3. See Luke vii. 37.—} Or,
pure nard, or, liquid nard.—} See Mat. xviii. 28.—c Deu.
xv. 11.—d Mat. xxvi. 14. Luke xxii. 3, 4.

See § LXXXII.

Matthew XXVI. 1—16.

§ CXXXIX.

CHAP. XIV. 12—31.

Christ himself foretelleth how he shall be betrayed by one of his disciples; after the passover prepared and eaten, instituteth his supper; declareth aforehand the flight of all his disciples, and Peter's denial.

12 ¶ And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

ST. MARK XIV. 12—31.

17 ^f And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I.*

20 And he answered and said unto them, *It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.*

21 ^g The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 ¶ ^h And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 ¶ ⁱ And when they had sung an ^h hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

27 ^k And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28 But ^l after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 ^m But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

^e Mat. xxvi. 17. Luke xxii. 7.—^f Or, *sacrificed*.—^g Mat. xxvi. 20, &c.—^h Mat. xxvi. 24. Luke xxii. 22.—ⁱ Mat. xxvi. 26. Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23.—^j Mat. xxvi. 30.—^k Or, *passion*.—^l Mat. xxvi. 31.—^m Zech. xiii. 7.—ⁿ ch. xvi. 7.—^o Mat. xxvi. 33, 34. Luke xxii. 33, 34. John xiii. 37, 38.

See § LXXXIII.

Matthew XXVI. 17—25.

§ CXL.

CHAP. XIV. 32—42.

Christ prayeth in the garden.

32 * And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane : and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy ;

34 And saith unto them, * My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death : tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, * Abba, Father, * All things *are* possible unto thee : take away this cup from me : * nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. * The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh is weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest : it is enough, * the hour is come ; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 * Rise up, let us go ; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

o Mat. xxvi. 36. Luke xxii. 29. John xviii. 1. —p John xii. 27.—q Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6.—r Heb. v. 7.—s John v. 30; & vi. 38.—t Rom. 7. 23. Gal. v. 17. —u John xiii. 1.—v Mat. xxvi. 46. John xviii. 1, 2.

See § LXXXIV.

Matthew XXVI. 36—46.

§ CXLI.

CHAP. XIV. 43—52.

Judas betrayeth Christ with a kiss. Christ is apprehended in the garden.

43 ¶ * And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he ; take him, and lead *him* away safely.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master ; and kissed him.

46 ¶ And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 * And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me ?

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not : but * the scriptures must be fulfilled.

50 * And they all forsook him, and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body* ; and the young men laid hold on him :

52 And he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

¶ Mat. xxvi. 47. Luke xxii. 47. John xviii. 8.—* Mat. xxvi. 56. Luke xxii. 52.—* Pa. xvii. 6. Is. liii. 7, &c. Luke xxii. 57 ; & xxiv. 44.—* Ps. lxxxviii. 8. ver. 27.

See § LXXXV.

Matthew XXVI. 47—56.

§ CXLII.

CHAP. XIV. 53—62.

Christ is falsely accused and impiously condemned of the Jews' council.

53 ¶ * And they led Jesus away to the high priest : and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest : and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55 * And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death ; and found none.

56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

58 We heard him say, * I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

60 / And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing ? what *is it which* these witness against thee ?

61 But ^e he held his peace, and answered nothing. ^f Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed ?

62 And Jesus said, I am : ^g and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

^e Mat. xxvi. 57. Luke xxii. 54. John xviii. 13.—^f Mat. xxvi. 59.—^g ch. xv. 29. John ii. 19.—^h Mat. xxvi. 62.—ⁱ Is. liii. 7.—^k Mat. xxvi. 63.—^l Mat. xxiv. 30; & xxvi. 64. Luke xxii. 69.

See § LXXXVI.

Matthew XXVI. 57—64.

§ CXLIII.

CHAP. XIV. 63—72.

Christ is shamefully abused by the Jews ; and thrice denied of Peter.

63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses ?

64 Ye have heard the blasphemy : what think ye ? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy : and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

66 ¶ ^k And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest :

67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch ; and the cock crew.

69 ^l And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

70 And he denied it again. ^m And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them : ⁿ for thou art a Galilæan, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

72 ^o And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crew twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And ^p when he thought thereon, he wept.

^q Mat. xxvi. 58, 69. Luke xxii. 55. John xviii. 16.—^r Mat. xxvi. 71. Luke xxii. 56. John xviii. 26.—^s Mat. xxvi. 73. Luke xxii. 59. John xviii. 26.—^t Acts ii. 7.—^u Mat. xxvi. 75.—^v Or, he wept abundantly, or, he began to weep.

See § LXXXVII.

Matthew XXVI. 65—75.

§ CXLIV.

CHAP. XV. 1—14.

Jesus brought bound, and accused before Pilate.

AND ^a straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate.

2 ^b And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

4 ^c And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

5 ^d But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6 Now ^e at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do*

as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

11 But ^f the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

^a Ps. ii. 2. Mat. xxvii. 1. Luke xxii. 66; & xxiii. 1. John xviii. 26. Acts iii. 13; iv. 26.—^b Mat. xxvii. 11.—^c Mat. xxvii. 13.—^d Is. liii. 7. John xix. 9.—^e Mat. xxvii. 15. Luke xxiii. 17. John xviii. 39.—^f Mat. xxvii. 20. Acts iii. 14.

See § LXXXIX.

Matthew XXVII. 11—23.

§ CXLV.

CHAP. XV. 15--21.

Upon the clamour of the common people, the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and Jesus delivered up to be crucified. He is crowned with thorns, spit on and mocked. He fainteth in bearing his cross.

15 ¶ ^ε And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified.

16 ^α And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*.

18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him.

20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

21 ^ι And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

^ε Mat. xxvii. 26. John xix. 1. 16.—^α Mat. xxvii. 27.—^ι Mat. xxvii. 32. Luke xxiii. 26.

See § XC.

Matthew XXVII. 24—32.

§ CXLVI.

CHAP. XV. 22--28.

Christ hangeth between two thieves.

22 ^α And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

23 ^ι And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

24 And when they had crucified him, ^α they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And ^ι it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And ^ο the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And ^ρ with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, ^ι And he was numbered with the transgressors.

^α Mat. xxvii. 33. Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 17.—^ι Mat. xxvii. 34.—^ο Ps. xxii. 18. Luke xxiii. 34. John xix. 23.—^ρ See Mat. xxvii. 45. Luke xxiii. 44. John xix. 14.—^σ Mat. xxvii. 37. John xix. 19.—^τ Mat. xxvii. 38.—^θ Is. liii. 12. Luke xxiii. 37.

See § XCI.

Matthew XXVII. 33—38.

§ CXLVII.

CHAP. XV. 29—36.

Christ suffereth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews.

29 And 'they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, 'thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days,

30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And 'they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 And * when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that

stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And 'one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and 'gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

r Ps. xxii. 7.—s ch. xiv. 58. John ii. 19.—t Mat. xxvii. 44. Luke xxiii. 39.—u Mat. xxvii. 45. Luke xxiii. 44.—v Ps. xxii. 1. Mat. xxvii. 46.—w Mat. xxvii. 48. John xix. 29.—x Ps. lxxix. 21.

See § XCII.

Matthew XXII. 39—49.

§ CXLVIII.

CHAP. XV. 37—41.

Christ dieth. He is confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God.

37 ' And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And 'the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 ¶ And ' when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

40 ' There were also women looking on ' afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

41 (Who also, when he was

in Galilee, ' followed him, and ministered unto him ;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

e Mat. xxvii. 50. Luke xxiii. 46. John xix. 30.—b Mat. xxvi. 51. Luke xxiii. 45.—c Mat. xxvii. 54. Luke xxiii. 47.—d Mat. xxvii. 55. Luke xxiii. 48.—e Ps. xxxviii. 11.—f Luke viii. 2. 3.

See § XCIII.

Matthew XXVII. 50—56.

§ CXLIX.

CHAP. XV. 42—47.

Christ is honourably buried by Joseph.

42 ¶ ' And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

43 Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor, which also ' waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead : and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 ' And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid

2 M

him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Josès beheld where he was laid.

g Mat. xxvii. 57. Luke xxiii. 50. John xix. 39.—h Luke ii. 25. 33.—i Mat. xxvii. 59. 60. Luke xxiii. 53. John xix. 40.

See § XCIV.

Matthew XXVII. 57—61.

§ CL.

CHAP. XVI. 1—14.

An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women. Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene ; to two going into the country ; then to the Apostles.

AND ' when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome, ' had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 ' And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ?

4 And when they looked,

457

they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 ^d And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 ^e And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, ^f as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: ^g neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid.

9 ¶ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, ^h he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, ⁱ out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 ^j And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12 ¶ After that he appeared

in another form ^m unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 ¶ ⁿ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at ^o meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

^a Mat. xxviii. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1.—^b Luke xxiii. 56.—^c Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1.—^d Luke xxiv. 3. John xx. 11, 12.—^e Mat. xxviii. 5, 6, 7.—^f Mat. xxvi. 22. ch. xiv. 28.—^g See Mat. xxviii. 8. Luke xxiv. 9.—^h John xx. 14.—ⁱ Luke viii. 2.—^j Luke xxiv. 10. John xx. 18.—^k Luke xxiv. 11.—^l Luke xxiv. 13.—^m Luke xxiv. 36. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 5.—ⁿ Or, together.

See § XCV.

Matthew XXVIII. 1—10.

§ CLI.

CHAP. XVI. 15—20.

Christ sendeth forth the Apostles to preach the Gospel; and ascendeth into heaven.

15 ^o And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, ^p and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 ^q He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; ^r but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; ^s In my name shall they cast out devils; ^t they shall speak with new tongues;

ST. LUKE I. 1—25.

18 * They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; † they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 ¶ So then † after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was † received up into heaven, and † sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and

preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, † and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

o Mat. xxviii. 19. John xv. 16.—p Col. i. 23.—q John iii. 18, 36. Acts ii. 38; & xvi. 30, 31, 32. Rom. x. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 21.—r John xii. 48.—s Luke x. 17. Acts v. 16; & viii. 7; & xvi. 18; & xix. 12.—t Acts ii. 4; & x. 46; & xiv. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28.—u Luke x. 19. Acts xxviii. 5.—v Acts v. 15, 16; & ix. 17; & xxviii. 8. Jam. v. 14, 15.—w Acts i. 2, 8.—x Luke xxiv. 51.—y Ps. cx. 1. Acts vii. 55.—z Acts v. 12; & xiv. 3. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Heb. ii. 4.

See § XCVII.

Matthew XXVIII. 19—20.

See also Acts II. 9; IV. 33.

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE.

§ CLII.

CHAP. I. 1—25.

The preface of Luke to his whole Gospel. The conception of John the Baptist.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 * Even as they delivered them unto us, which † from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 * It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee † in order, † most excellent Theophilus,

4 † That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

5 ¶ THERE was † in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, † of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daugh-

ters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6 And they were both 'righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God ^k in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was 'to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of "the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, ° he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and ° thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy

and gladness; and ° many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and ° shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, ° even from his mother's womb.

16 'And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, ° to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient ' to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, ° Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am ° Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, ° thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled

that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them : and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple : for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as 'the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to 'take away my reproach among men.

o Heb. ii. 3. 1 Pet. v. 1. 2 Pet. i. 16. 1 John i. 1.—
4 Mark i. 1. John xv. 27.—c Acts xv. 19, 25, 28. 1 Cor.
vii. 40.—d Acts xi. 4.—e Acts i. 1.—f John xx. 31. Before
the Common Account, called Anno Domini, the sixth
Year.—g Mat. ii. 1.—h 1 Chr. xxiv. 10, 19. Neh. xii. 4,
17.—i Gen. vii. 1; & xvii. 1. 1 Kin. ix. 4. 2 Kin. xx. 8.
Job i. 1. Acts xxiii. 1; & xxiv. 16. Phil. iii. 6.—k 1 Chr.
xix. 19. 2 Chr. viii. 14; & xxvi. 2.—l Ex. xxx. 7, 8.
1 Sam. ii. 26. 1 Chr. xxiii. 13. 2 Chr. xix. 11.—m Lev.
xv. 17. Lev. vii. 3, 4.—n Ex. xxx. 1.—o Judg. vi 22;
& xiii. 22. Dan. x. 8. ver. 29. ch. ii. 9. Acts x. iv.
Rev. i. 17.—p ver. 60, 63.—q ver. 58.—r Num. vi. 3. Judg.
xiii. 4. ch. vii. 33.—s Jer. i. 6. Gal. i. 16.—t Mal. iv. 5.
6.—u Mal. iv. 5. Mat. xi. 14. Mark ix. 12.—x Ecclus.
xviii. 10.—y Or, *by*.—z Gen. xvii. 17.—a Dan. viii.
16; & ix. 21, 22, 23. Mat. xviii. 10. Heb. i. 14.—b Ezek.
iii. 26; & xxiv. 27.—c See 2 Kin. xi. 5. 1 Chr. ix. 26.—
d Gen. xxx. 23. Is. iv. 1; & liv. 1, 4.

READER. *They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*—Never times were so barren as not to yield some good : the greatest dearth affords some few good ears to the gleaners.—There is no certainty, but there is likelihood, of a holy generation, when the parents are such. Elizabeth was just, as well as Zacharias, that the forerunner of a Saviour might

be holy on both sides. If the stock and the graff be not both good, there is much danger of the fruit.—It is a happy match, when the husband and the wife are one, not only in themselves, but in God ; not more in flesh, than in the spirit. Grace makes no difference of sexes ; rather the weaker carries away the more honour, because it hath had less helps. It is easy to observe that the New Testament affordeth more store of good women than the Old.—HALL.

He executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, &c.—None but a son of Aaron might offer incense to God in the Temple ; and not every son of Aaron ; and not any one at all seasons. God is a God of order, and hates confusion no less than irreligion. Albeit he hath not so straitened himself under the Gospel, as to tie his service to persons or places, yet his choice is now no less curious because it is more large : he allows none but the authorized ; he authorizes none but the worthy. The incense doth ever smell of the hand that offers it : I doubt not but that perfume was sweeter, which ascended up from the hand of a just Zacharias. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to God."

There were courses of ministration in the legal services ; God never purposed to burden any of his creatures with devotion. How vain is the ambition of any soul that would load itself with the universal charge of all men ! How thankless is their labour that do wilfully overspend

themselves in their ordinary vocation! As Zacharias had a course in God's house, so he carefully observed it: the favour of these respites doubled his diligence. The more high and sacred our calling is, the more dangerous is neglect. It is our honour that we may be allowed to wait upon the God of heaven in these immediate services. Woe be to us, if we slacken those duties wherein God honours us more than we can honour him!—HALL.

His lot was to burn incense, &c. I do not find any prescription they had from God, of this peculiar manner of designment. Matters of good order, in holy affairs, may be ruled by the wise institution of men, according to reason and expediency.—HALL.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. That the resemblance of prayers and incense might be apparent, while the priest sends up his incense within the temple, the people must send up their prayers without; their breath, and that incense, though remote in the first rising, met ere they went up to heaven.

The people might no more go into the holy place to offer up the incense of prayers unto God, than Zacharias might go into the Holy of Holies. While the partition-wall stood betwixt Jews and Gentiles, there were also partitions betwixt the Jews themselves. Now, every man is a priest unto God; every man, since the vail was rent, prays within the temple.—What are we the better for our greater freedom

of access to God, under the Gospel, if we do not make use of our privilege?—HALL.

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. The same angel that came to the blessed Virgin with the news of Christ's conception, came to Zacharias with the news of John's. Both had the Gospel for their errand; one as the messenger of it, the other as the author: both are foretold by the same mouth.

When could it be more fit for the angel to appear unto Zacharias than when prayers and incense were offered by him? Where could he more fitly appear than in the temple? In what part of the temple more fitly than at the altar of incense? And whereabouts rather than on the right side of the altar? These glorious spirits, as they are always with us, and so most in our devotions; and as in all places, so most of all in God's house: they rejoice to be with us while we are with God; as, contrarily, they turn their faces from us, when we go about our sins.—HALL.

And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias.—It was partly the suddenness, and partly the glory, of the apparition that affrighted him. The good angel was both apprehensive and compassionate of his weakness; and presently encouraged him with a cheerful excitation.—It is a fruit of that deadly enmity that is betwixt Satan and us, that he would,

if he might, kill us with terror ; whereas the good spirits, affecting our relief and happiness, take no pleasure in terrifying us, but labour altogether for our tranquillity and cheerfulness.—HALL.

Thy prayer is heard. Thus doth the mercy of our God deal with his patient and faithful suppliants. In the fervour of their expectation, he many times holds them off ; and when they least think of it, and have forgotten their own suits, he graciously condescends. Delay of effect may not discourage our faith ; it may be, God hath long granted, ere we shall know of his grant.—HALL.

Thou shalt have joy and gladness ; and many shall rejoice at his birth. To hear what his son should be before he was ; to hear that he should have such a son, a son whose birth should concern the joy of many, a son that should be great in the sight of the Lord, a son that should be sacred to God, filled with God, beneficial to man, a harbinger to him that was God and man, was news enough to prevent the angel, and to take away that tongue with amazement, which was afterwards lost with incredulity.—HALL.

And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this ?—It is a sure way for the heart, to be prevented with the assurance of the omnipotent power of God, to whom nothing is impossible. So shall the hardest points of faith go down easily with us. If the eye of our mind look upward, it shall meet with nothing to arrest or interrupt it ; but if right forward, or downward, or round about,

every thing is a block in our way.

Faith and reason have their limits ; where reason ends faith begins : and if reason will be encroaching upon the bounds of faith, she is strait taken captive by infidelity. We are not fit to follow Christ, if we have not denied ourselves ; and the chief piece of ourselves is our reason : we must yield God able to do that which we cannot comprehend.—HALL.

Behold thou shalt be dumb and not able to speak, until, &c.—That tongue which moved the doubt, must be tied up ; he shall ask no more questions for forty weeks, because he asked this one distrustfully.

God will not pass oversight offences, and those which may plead the most colourable pretences, in his best children, without a serious check. It is not our holy entireness with God that can bear us out in the least sin ; yea rather the more acquaintance we have with his majesty, the more sure we are of correction when we offend.—HALL.

And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. Their patient attendance without shames us that are hardly persuaded to attend within, while both our senses are employed in our divine services, and we are admitted to be co-agents with our ministers. *And when he came out he could not speak unto them.* God makes way for his voice by silence ; the speech of Zacharias could not have said so much as his dumbness. He would fain have spoken and could not : with us, too many are dumb, and need not. Negligence, fear, partiality, stop the

mouths of many which shall once say, Woe to me, because I held my peace. *He beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own home.* His hand speaks that which he cannot with his tongue; and he makes them by signs to understand that which they might read in his face. Those powers we have we must use. But though he has ceased to speak, yet he ceased not to minister: he takes not this dumbness for a dismissal, but stays out the eight days of his course, as one that knew that eyes, hands, and heart would be accepted by that God which had bereaved him of his tongue. We may not take slight occasions of withdrawing ourselves from the public services of our God, much less under the Gospel.—HALL.

PSALM LXXXIV.

My heart and flesh cry out for Thee
While far from thine abode;
When shall I tread thy courts, and see
My Saviour and my God?

The sparrow builds herself a nest,
And suffers no remove;
O make me, like the sparrows, blest,
To dwell but where I love.

To sit one day beneath thine eye
And hear thy gracious voice,
Exceeds a whole eternity,
Employ'd in carnal joys.

Lord, at thy threshold I would wait
While Jesus is within;
Rather than fill a throne of state,
Or live in tents of sin.

Could I command the spacious land
And the more boundless sea;
For one blest hour at thy right hand
I'd give them both away.

WATTS.

§ CLIII.

CHAP. I. 26—38.

The conception of Christ.

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin ⁴ espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, ⁶ Hail, *thou that art* ¹ highly favoured, ⁷ the Lord *is* with thee: *blessed art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, ⁸ she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 ⁹ And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and ¹⁰ shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great ¹¹ and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and ¹² the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 ¹³ And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man ?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called ° the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age : and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For ' with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

d Mat. i. 18. ch. ii. 4, 5.—e Dan. ix. 28; & x. 19.—
1 Or, graciously accepted, or, much graced. See ver. 30.
—f Judg. vi. 12.—g ver. 12.—h Is. vii. 14. Mat. i. 21.—
i ch. ii. 21.—k Mark v. 7.—l 2 Sam. vii. 11, 12. Is. ix. 6,
7; & xvi. 5. Jer xxiii. 5. Ps. cxxxii. 11. Rev. iii. 7.—
m Dan. ii. 44; & vii. 14, 27. Obad. 21. Mic. iv. 7. John
xii. 34. Heb. i. 8.—n Mat. i. 20.—o Mat. xiv. 33; & xxvi.
63, 64. Mark. i. 1. John i. 34; & xx. 31. Acts viii. 37.
Rom. i. 4.—p Gen. xviii. 14. Jer. xxxii. 17. Zech. viii.
6. Mat. xix. 28. Mark x. 27. ch. xviii. 27. Rom. iv. 21.

READER. *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God.* No good angel could be the author of our restoration, as the evil angel was of our ruin; but that which these glorious spirits could not do themselves they are glad to report as done by the God of spirits. Good news rejoice the bearer. With what joy did this holy angel bring the news of that Saviour in whom we are re-

3 N

deemed to life, himself established in life and glory !

The first preacher of the Gospel was an angel. God appointed his angel to be the first preacher, and hath since called his preachers angels.—HALL.

Unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.—No blind corner of Nazareth can hide the blessed Virgin from the angel. The favours of God will find out his children, wheresoever they are withdrawn.—It is the fashion of God to seek out the most despised, on whom to bestow his honours: we cannot run away, as from the judgments, so not from the mercies of God.—Why should we be transported with the outward glory of places, while our God regards it not? We are not of the angel's diet, if we had not rather be with the blessed Virgin at Nazareth, than with the proud dames at the court of Jerusalem.—HALL.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, &c.—The angel salutes the Virgin; he prays not to her. He salutes her as a saint, he prays not to her as a goddess. For us to salute her, as he did, were gross presumption: for neither are we as he was, neither is she as she was. If he that was a spirit saluted her that was flesh and blood here on earth, it is not for us, that are flesh and blood, to salute her who is a glorious spirit in heaven. For us to pray to her, in the angel's salutation, were to abuse the Virgin, the angel, the salutation.—HALL.

Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. The troubles of holy minds ever end in comfort. Joy

465

was the errand of the angel, and not terror.—What room can fear find in that breast that is assured of favour? Let those fear who know they are in displeasure, or know not they are gracious.—“We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.” If that spirit, O God, witness with our spirits that we are thine, how can we fear any of those spiritual wickednesses! Give us assurance of thy favour, and let the powers of hell do their worst!—HALL.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.—It was no ordinary favour that the Virgin found in heaven. No mortal creature was ever thus graced, that he should take part of her nature, that was the God of nature.—There is no renewed heart wherein thou, O Saviour, art not formed again. Blessed be thou that hast herein made us blessed!—HALL.

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c.—It is enough to know who is the undertaker, and what he will do. O God, what do we seek? A clear light, where thou wilt have a shadow? No mother knows the manner of her natural conception: what presumption shall it be for flesh and blood to search how the Son of God took flesh and blood of his creature! It is for none but the Almighty to know those works which he doth immediately concerning himself; those that concern us he hath revealed. Secrets to God; things revealed to us.—HALL.

With God nothing shall be impossible.

All things possible are the object of God's absolute power; and all things are in themselves possible which do not imply a contradiction. And oh! how vast and incomprehensible is the sum of all these! God might have created more worlds, more angels and men, than he hath done; more sorts of creatures, and more of every sort, if he had so pleased: yea, and he might have been creating and acting from all eternity to all eternity; and in his infinite duration been still producing new, and therefore infinite, effects; for “with God nothing shall be impossible.” And the only reason why God hath produced such effects and no other, so many and not more, is not from want of power, but merely from the free determination of his own will and counsel. He might have hindered the fall of man, restored the fallen angels, raised the stones to be children unto Abraham, brought more deluges and general plagues upon the world, if he had so pleased: yea, and though our fancy and imagination hath a large empire, and seems boundless in those fictions and portraitures of things which we paint there, yet God can really create more than we can only imaginarily create; for we can only patch together those things which we have seen, or have otherwise been the objects of our senses, and by putting together several pieces of things really existing, make an idea of that which never was. But God can actually cause those species and kinds of beings in the world which never were, nor ever was there

ST. LUKE I. 39—56.

a former resemblance of them ; and so can infinitely exceed the largest scope of what in us seems most unlimited, even our thoughts and fancies, for he is able to do above what we are able to think.

It requires no more power in God to work miracles than the most ordinary and common events that happen. Only, those are said to be miracles which are against or above the course of nature, and those to be natural events which are according to it ; but to a considering mind both the one and the other do equally declare the almighty and infinite power of God.
—HOPKINS.

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word. The answer was not so full but that a thousand difficulties might arise out of the particulars of so strange a message ; yet after the angel's solution, we hear of no more objections, no more interrogations. The faithful heart, when once it understands the good pleasure of God, argues no more, but surely rests itself in a quiet expectation. " Behold the servant of the Lord ; be it to me according to thy word." There is not a more noble proof of our faith than to captivate all the powers of our understanding and will to our creator, and without curious inquiries to go blindfold whither he will lead us. All disputations with God, after his known will, arise from infidelity. " Great is the mystery of godliness," and if we will give nature leave to cavil, we cannot be Christians. O God, thou art faithful, thou art powerful ; it is enough that thou hast

said it : in the humility of our obedience, we resign ourselves over unto thee. Behold the servants of the Lord ; be it unto us according to thy word !—HALL.

PSALM CXVI.

What shall I render to my God
For all his kindness shown ?
My feet shall visit thine abode,
My songs address thy throne.

Among the saints that fill thine house,
My offerings shall be paid ;
There shall my zeal perform the vows
My soul in anguish made.

How happy all thy servants are !
How great thy grace to me !
My life which thou hast made thy care,
Lord, I devote to thee !

WATTS.

§ CLIV.

CHAP. I. 39—56.

The prophecy of Elisabeth, and of Mary, concerning Christ.

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, ⁹ into a city of Juda ;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb ; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost :

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me ?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed is she ^h that believed : for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary said, ' My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For ' he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden : for, behold, from henceforth ^h all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty ^h hath done to me great things ; and ^h holy is his name.

50 And ' his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 ' He hath shewed strength with his arm ; ^h he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 ^h He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 ' He hath filled the hungry with good things ; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, ^h in remembrance of *his* mercy ;

55 ' As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

g Job. xxi. 9, 10, 11.—r ver. 28. Judges v. 24.—l Or, which believed that there—e l Sam. ii. 1. Psalm xxxiv. 2, 8 ; & xxxv. 9. Hab. iii. 18.—f l Sam. i. 11. Psalm cxxxviii. 6.—w Mat. iii. 12 ; ch. xi. 27.—w Pa. lxxi. 19 ; & cxxvi. 2, 3.—s Pa. cxi. 9.—y Gen. xxii. 7. Ex. xv. 6. Pa. ciii. 17, 18.—z Pa. xcvi. 1 ; & cxviii. 15. Is. xl. 10 ; & li. 9 ; & lli. 10.—a Pa. xxxiii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 5.—b l Sam. ii. 6, &c. Job v. 11. Pa. cxlii. 6.—c l Sam. ii. 5. Ps. xxxiv. 10.—d Pa. xcvi. 3. Jer. xxxi. 3, 20.—e Gen. xvii. 19. Pa. cxxxii. 11. Rom. xi. 28. Gal. iii. 16.

READER.—*And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country, &c.* Grief grows greater by concealing ; joy by expression. The holy Virgin had understood by the angel how her cousin Elisabeth was no less of kin to her in condition. Happiness communicated doubles itself. Here is no straining of courtesy. The blessed maid, whom vigour of age had more fitted for the journey, hastens her way into the hill country, to visit that gracious nation whom God had made a sign of her miraculous conception. Only the meeting of saints in heaven can parallel the meeting of these two cousins.—When we have Christ spiritually conceived in us, we cannot be quiet till we have imparted our joy. Elisabeth, that holy matron, did no sooner welcome her blessed cousin, than her babe wel-

comes his Saviour. How should our hearts leap within us, when the Son of God vouchsafes to come into the secret of our souls, not to visit us, but to dwell with us, to dwell in us! —HALL.

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.—Let us rejoice in the Lord our Saviour, “the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe,” 1 Tim. iv. 10; the strength, the God of our salvation; our salvation itself: for “the Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation,” Psalm cxviii. 14. The very naming of this is enough to fill our hearts with joy and gladness, as much and more than they are able to hold: that the Almighty Creator, Preserver, and Governor, of the whole world in general, should in a particular and wonderful manner, become the Saviour, yea, the salvation, of mankind:—that he for that purpose should be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a woman, so as to be both “perfect God, and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting:” that having thus taken our nature upon him, he in that should perform exact obedience to his own laws, and then offer it up as a sacrifice for our transgressions of them; that as he was delivered for our offences, he was raised again for our justification: that he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: that being raised from the dead, he went up into heaven, and was there set at

the right hand of God the Father: that the man Christ Jesus is there exalted above all the creatures in the world, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject to him: that he is now there appearing in the presence of God for us, the Mediator between God and us, our Advocate with the Father, ever living to make intercession for us: that we have such a glorious, such an Almighty, Saviour in heaven, continually taking care of all things necessary to bring us thither: that he is therefore making such effectual intercession for us, by virtue of the death he suffered for our sins, that they are all forgiven for his name’s sake: that he is there exalted by the right hand of God, to be a Prince as well as a Saviour, to give repentance also, as well as forgiveness of sins: that nothing can happen in the world by the general Providence of God, but he is there ready to bless it to us, and make it turn to our advantage; that by him we have access to God the Father, and can truly call him our God and our Father too: that whatever we ask in his name, we are sure to have it, so far as it is good for us: that he from thence supplies us with all things necessary both for life and godliness, that we may never want anything that can contribute to our sanctification and salvation by him: that he from thence sends down his Holy Spirit upon us, and so by it is always present with us, to direct us what to do, and to assist us in the doing of it: that his grace is always sufficient for us, and his strength made perfect in our weakness, so that “we can do all things through

Christ that strengtheneth us :” that he also, as the Sun of righteousness in heaven, reflects such a lustre upon what we do, that although we be imperfect in ourselves, yet we are accepted as righteous through him :—in short, that he is now in heaven preparing a place for us, that we may live with him there, and rejoice in him for ever. Can we hear all this, and our hearts not burn within us? What greater joy can there be than this, that we have such a Saviour who is “able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him?” How well then may we say, with the blessed Virgin, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!”; and with the prophet, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness!” Isaiah lxi. 10; and with the psalmist, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms,” Psalm xc. 1, 2; and with the Apostle, “Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice.”—BEVERIDGE.

His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.—We have his own word for it that “his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation;” and that he taketh pleasure in them that fear him, “in those that hope in his mercy,”

Psalm cxlvii. 11. And therefore, as the wise man observes, “In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence,” Prov. xiv. 26. For the more we fear him the more cause we have to trust in him, and to hope for mercy, and all good things we can desire from him. They who always set God before them, as they cannot but always fear him, so they cannot but also put their trust and confidence in him, as always ready to protect and defend them; so that they shall never be moved from that state and condition of life which he in his infinite wisdom and goodness sees best for them. This hath been the constant experience of all good men in all ages, even of all who always set God before them, and so have him always on their side: and if God be for them, who can be against them? If he be with them, what evil can come near them? What need they fear who have Omnipotence itself always ready to preserve them wheresoever they are? This is the argument which he himself makes use of to encourage his people, that they may fear nothing but him; “Fear thou not,” saith he, “for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,” Is. xli. 10. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee,” Is. xliii. 2. God may suffer his people to pass through fire and water, but he will not suffer them to

be hurt by either of them : he may bring them into trouble, but he will preserve them from the evil of it, and make it really good for them ; and all, because he is still with them in it. Thus he was with Noah in the ark, with Joseph in prison, with Israel in the midst of the sea, with Job upon the dunghill, with David upon the mountains, with the three children in the fiery furnace, with Daniel in the lions' den, with Jeremiah in the dungeon, with Jonsh in the whale's belly, and with the Apostles in the common prison : and being always with them, how wonderfully did he preserve them, altering often the very course of nature, rather than any thing should hurt them who set him always before them !—
BEVERIDGE.

He hath scattered the proud, &c. It is undoubtedly the secret pride and selfishness of our hearts that obstruct much of the bounty of God's hand in the measure of our graces, and the sweet embraces of his love, which we should otherwise find. The more we let go of ourselves, still the more should we receive of himself. O foolish we, who refuse so blessed an exchange !

Of all the evils of our corrupt nature, there is none more connatural or universal than pride, the grand wickedness, self-exalting in our own and others' opinion. Though I will not contest what was the first step in that complicated first sin, yet certainly this of pride was one, and a main ingredient in it ; that which unbelief going before, and disobedience following after, were both servantsto ; and ever since it cleaves closely to our nature. Augustin says

truly, "That which first overcame man, is the last thing he overcomes." Some sins, comparatively, may die before us ; but this hath life in it sensibly as long as we. It is as the heart of all, the first living and the last dying ; and it hath this advantage, that whereas other sins are fomented by one another, this feeds even on virtues and graces as a moth that breeds in them and consumes them, even in the finest of them, if it be not carefully looked to. This hydra, as one head of it is cut off, another rises up. It will secretly cleave to the best actions, and prey upon them. And therefore is there so much need that we continually watch, and fight, and pray against it, and be restless in the pursuit of real and deep humiliation, daily seeking to advance further in it ; to be nothing, and to desire to be nothing ; not only to bear, but to love, our own abasement, and the things that procure and help it, to take pleasure in them, so far as may be without sin : yea, even in respect of our sinful feelings, when they are discovered, to love the bringing low of ourselves by them, while we hate and grieve for the sin of them.

And, above all, it is requisite to watch ourselves in our best things, that self get not in, or, if it break in or steal in at any time, that it be presently found out and cast out again ; to have that established within us, to do all for God, to intend him and his glory in all, and to be willing to advance his glory were it by our own disgrace ; not to make raising or pleasing thyself the rule of exercising thy

parts and graces, when thou art called to use and bring them forth, but the good of thy brethren, and in that the glory of thy Lord. Now this is indeed to be severed from self and united to him, to have self-love turned into the love of God. And this is his own work; it is above all other hands: therefore, the main combat against pride, and the conquest of it, and the gaining of humility, is certainly by prayer. God bestows himself most upon those who are most abundant in prayer; and those to whom he shows himself most are certainly the most humble.—LEIGHTON.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. "He giveth grace to the lowly,"—pours it out plentifully upon humble hearts. His sweet dews and showers of grace slide off the mountains of pride, and fall on the low valleys of humble hearts, and make them pleasant and fertile. The swelling heart, puffed up with a fancy of fulness, hath no room for grace. It is lifted up, is not hallowed and fitted to receive and contain the graces that descend from above. And again; as the humble heart is most capacious, and, as being emptied and hollowed, can hold most, so it is the most thankful, acknowledges all as received, while the proud cries out that all is his own. The return of glory that is due to grace comes most freely and plentifully from an humble heart: God delights to enrich it with grace, and it delights to return him glory. The more he bestows on it, the more it desires to honour him with all; and the more it doth so, the more readily he bestows

still more upon it; and this is the sweet intercourse between God and the humble soul.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Sweeter sounds than music knows
Charm me in Emmanuel's name;
All her hopes my spirit owes
To his birth, and cross, and shame.

When he came, the angels sung
"Glory be to God on high;"
Lord, unloose my falt'ring tongue,
Who should louder sing than I!

Did the Lord a man become
That he might the Law fulfil,
Bleed and suffer in my room;
And canst thou, my tongue, be still?

Oh! my Saviour, shield, and sun,
Lord and master, brother, friend,
Every precious name in one
May I love thee to the end!

NEWTON.

§ CLV.

CHAP. I. 57—80.

*The nativity and circumcision of John.
The prophecy of Zacharias, both of Christ,
and of John.*

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came

to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, * Not *so*; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, ' His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 * And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these ' sayings were noised abroad throughout all ' the hill country of Judæa.

66 And all they that heard *them* " laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And * the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias ' was filled with the Holy Ghost, and porphesied, saying,

68 ' Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for ' he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 ' And hath raised up an

horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 ' As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 ' To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

75 * The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might * serve him without fear,

75 ' In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for ' thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways:

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people " by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the " tender mercy of our God; whereby the " dayspring from on high hath visited us,

79 ' To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And ' the child grew, and

waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

f ver. 14.—*g* Gen. xvii. 12. Lev. xii. 8.—*h* ver. 13.—*i* ver. 13.—*k* ver. 20. || *Or, things.*—*l* ver. 39.—*m* ch. ii. 19, 51.—*n* Gen. xxx. 2. Psalm lxxx. 17; & lxxxix. 21. Acts xi. 21.—*o* Joel ii. 28.—*p* 1 Kings i. 48. Psalm xli. 13. & lxxii. 18; & cvi. 48.—*q* Ex. iii. 16; & iv. 31. Psalm cxi. 9. ch. vii. 16.—*r* Psalm cxxii. 17.—*s* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; & xxx. 10. Dan. ix. 24. Acts iii. 21. Rom. i. 2.—*t* Lev. xxvi. 42. Psalm xcvi. 8; & cv. 8, 9; & cvl. 45. *t* sch. xvi. 60. ver. 54.—*u* Gen. xii. 8; & xvii. 4; & xxii. 16, 17. Heb. vi. 18, 17.—*v* Rom. vi. 18, 22. Heb. ix. 14.—*w* Jer. xxiii. 29, 40. Eph. iv. 24. 2 Thes. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. ix. Titus ii. 12. 1 Peter i. 15. 2 Peter i. 4.—*x* Is. xi. 8. Mal. iii. 1; & iv. 5. Mat. xi. 10 ver. 17.—*y* Mark i. 4. ch. iii. 8. || *Or, for.* || *Or, bowels of the mercy.* || *Or, arising, or, branch.* Num. xxiv. 17. Is. xi. 1. Zech. iii. 8; & vi. 12. Mal. iv. 2.—*z* Is. ix. 2; & xlii. 7; & xlix. 9. Mat. iv. xvi. Acts xxvi. 18.—*a* ch. ii. 40.—*b* Mat. iii. 1; & xi. 7.

READER.—*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, &c.* Our nature, in the original constitution of it, in the persons of our first parents, was crowned with honour and dignity. The image of God wherein it was made, and the dominion over the lower world where-with it was intrusted, made it the seat of excellency, of beauty, and of glory. But of them all it was at once divested and made naked by sin, and laid grovelling in the dust from whence it was taken. And all its internal faculties were invaded by deformed lusts, every thing that might render the whole unlike to God, whose image it had lost. Hence it became the contempt of angels, the dominion of Satan, who being the enemy of the creation, never had anything or place to reign in but the debased nature of man. Nothing was now more vile and base; its glory was utterly departed. It had both lost its peculiar nearness unto God, which was its honour, and was fallen into the greatest distance from him of all creatures, the devils excepted, which was its ignominy and shame. And in this state, as to any thing in itself, it was left to perish eternally.

In this condition, lost, poor, base, yea cursed, the Lord Christ, the Son of God, found our nature. And in infinite condescension and compassion, sanctifying a portion of it to himself, he took it to be his own; in a holy ineffable subsistence in his own person. And herein again, the same nature, so depressed unto the utmost misery, is exalted above the whole creation of God. For, in that nature, God hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

Those who engage this nature in the service of sensual lusts and pleasures, who think that its felicity and utmost capacities consist in their satisfaction, with the accomplishment of other earthly temporal desires, are satisfied with it in its state of apostasy from God. But those who have received the light of faith and grace, so as rightly to understand the being and end of that nature whereof they are partakers, cannot but rejoice in its deliverance from the utmost debasement into that glorious exaltation which it hath received in the person of Christ.—OWEN.

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, &c. It is said of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he declared unto his disciples in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself; Luke xxiv. 27. It is therefore manifest that Moses, and the prophets, and all the Scriptures, do give testimony to him and his glory. This is the line of life

and light which runs through the whole Old Testament ; without the conduct thereof, we can understand nothing aright therein : and the neglect hereof is that which makes many as blind in reading the books of it as are the Jews, the same veil being upon their minds.—OWEN.

That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, &c. We are delivered from the cruel servitude of sin and the prince of darkness, not to licentiousness and libertinism, but to true liberty. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;" John viii. 36. Delivered from the power of our enemies,—to what end? to serve him without fear, that terror which we should be subject to if we were not delivered; and to serve him all the days of our lives. And that *all*, if many hundred times longer than it is, yet were too little for him. It is not such a servitude as that of Egypt from which we are delivered; that ended to each one with his life; but the misery from which we are redeemed begins but in the fulness of it when life ends and endures for ever.—LEIGHTON.

In holiness and righteousness before him.—Nor is the true and genuine beauty of the soul anything distinct from its purity and sanctity. This is the true image of its great Creator; that golden crown which unhappily dropped off the head of man when he fell, so that, with the greatest justice we may lament and say, "Woe unto us that we have sinned." And it is the general design and intention of true religion, in all its mysteries and all its precepts, that this crown may be

again restored, at least to some part of the human race, and this image again stamped upon them; which image when fully completed and for ever confirmed, will certainly constitute a great part of that happiness which we now hope for and aspire after. Then, we trust, we shall attain to a more full conformity and resemblance to our beloved head. The Father of mercies has made choice of us that we may be holy; the Son of God, blessed for ever, has once for all shed his blood upon earth, in order to purify us, and he daily pours out his spirit from heaven upon us for the same purpose.—LEIGHTON.

Whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light, &c.—That light which frees the soul, and rescues it from the very kingdom of darkness, must be somewhat beyond that which nature can attain to. All the light of philosophy, natural and moral, is not sufficient; yea, the very knowledge of the law, severed from Christ, serves not so to enlighten and renew the soul as to free it from darkness or ignorance. St. Paul, writing to Jews who knew the law and were instructed in it before their conversion, calls those times wherein Christ was unknown to them, the "times of their ignorance." Though the stars shine ever so bright, and the moon with them in its full, yet they do not altogether make it day; still it is night till the sun appear. Therefore the Hebrew doctors, upon that word of Solomon's, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," say, "Vain even the law until Messiah come." Of him Zacharias says, "The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light

ST. LUKE II. 1—7.

to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”—LEIGHTON.

The great teacher of the true knowledge of his law, and of himself, and of ourselves, is God. Men may speak to the ear, but “his chair is in heaven that teacheth hearts.” Matchless teacher! that teacheth more in one hour than men can do in a whole age! that can cure the invincible unteachableness of the dullest hearts, “gives understanding to the simple and opens the eyes of the blind.” So then, would we be made wise, wise for eternity, learned in real living divinity, let us sit down at his feet, and make this our continued request, “What I see not, teach thou me.”—LEIGHTON.

To guide our feet into the way of peace. Almost all mankind are constantly catching at something more than they possess, and torment themselves in vain; nor is our rest to be found among the enjoyments of the world, where all things are covered with a deluge of vanity, as with a flood of fluctuating restless waters, and the soul flying about, looking in vain for a place on which it may set its foot, most unhappily loses its time, its labour, and itself at last, like “the birds in the days of the flood, which having long sought for land, till their strength was quite exhausted, fell down at last, and perished in the waters.” O! how greatly preferable are the delightful fields of the Gospel, wherein pleasure and profit are agreeably mixed together, whence you may learn the way to everlasting peace,—that poverty of spirit, which is the only true riches,—that purity of heart, which

is our greatest beauty,—and that inexpressible satisfaction which attends the exercise of charity, humility, and meekness! When your minds are stored and adorned with these graces, they will enjoy the most pleasant tranquillity, even amidst the noise and tumults of this present life.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Behold the woman's promis'd seed!
Behold the great Messiah come!
Behold the prophets all agreed
To give him the superior room!

Abra'm the saint rejoic'd of old
When visions of the Lord he saw;
Moses, the man of God, foretold
This great fulfiller of the Law.

The types bore witness to his name,
Obtain'd their chief design, and ceas'd;
The incense, and the bleeding lamb,
The ark, the altar, and the priest.

Predictions in abundance meet
To join their blessings on his head,
Jesus! we worship at thy feet
And nations own the promis'd seed.

WATTS.

§ CLVI.

CHAP. II. 1—7.

*Augustus taxeth all the Roman Empire.
The nativity of Christ.*

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (*And this taxing was first*

ST. LUKE II. 1—7.

made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

[Or, *taxed*.—*a* Acts v. 27.—*b* 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 4. John vii. 42.—*c* Mat. i. 16. ch. i. 27.—*d* Mat. i. 18. ch. i. 27.—*e* Mat. i. 25.]

Reader. The "taxing" here mentioned was a Roman census, or enrolment of the names, property, and condition of persons forming the whole or part of the empire. This census does not appear to have been general, or to have extended to all parts of the Roman dominions, but to have been confined to the Jewish nation. 'The whole world,' according to a common phraseology, denotes the whole land of Judæa.

Cyrenius (Caius Sulpicius Quirinus,) was not governor of Syria

until about twelve years after our Saviour's birth. Some critics would render ver. 2, "This enrolment was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria; or before that of Cyrenius," which is a good translation, and consistent with the truth of history. Others read it thus: "This was the first enrolment of Cyrenius, governor of Syria;" supposing that Cyrenius, who was afterwards governor of Syria, was employed on the occasion here stated, and that he conducted a second census while he was in office. This was the first enrolment which Cyrenius who was (afterwards) governor of Syria, made; implying that, after he became governor, he made a second.—In either way the sense is good, and the seeming difficulty disappears. It has also been suggested, that by the alteration of an accent (which may be easily allowed), we may properly translate the passage thus, "The enrolment itself was not made until Cyrenius was governor of Syria." It is remarkable that St. Luke pointedly refers in the first verse to the *issuing of the decree*; and if we translate the second verse in the way now described, we are reminded that the decree, although made at the time of Christ's birth, was then only partially executed, and was not carried into effect until Cyrenius was in office. The decree was published, and some preparations were made for compliance with it; Joseph and Mary, and others, repaired to their respective cities; but from some cause or other the proceedings were not then complet-

ST. LUKE II. 1—7.

ed, and it remained for Cyrenius to make up the census.—EDITOR.

READER.—*And she brought forth her first-born son.* As for the reason why the Son of God did assume our nature; the chiefest and clearest reason thereof was, God's design thereby to exercise and demonstrate his immense goodness, mercy and pity toward us; "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." "In this the love of God was manifested, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live by him." "Through the tender mercy of our God the dayspring from on high did visit us." It was his benignity and philanthropy, which induced him to engage his Son upon such a debasement and emptying of himself, that we might thereby be raised to a capacity of salvation,

If we farther desire to contemplate the wisdom of God in this admirable proceeding; and to know, why God among other means and methods, alike (for all we can know) possible to him, did choose in this way to transact our redemption; it may be answered, that it becometh us rather to adore the depth of God's wisdom herein, than to sound it, or to hope by searching to reach the bottom of it: yet some congruities of this method to the reason and exigency of things are in the Scripture intimated to us, and in some manner are discernible by us, sufficient to recommend the divine wisdom therein to our admiration; reasons may be assigned why our Redeemer should be God and man. It well became God to stoop down thus, that

has his goodness towards us was infinite, so the demonstrations thereof, to his glory and our benefit, should be answerably such; which perhaps could not otherwise be, than by such a condesension: as a Prince could not make any other so great attestations of favour to his vassal, as by descending from his throne, laying aside his majesty, putting himself into a like condition, conversing freely with him, subjecting himself to the same laws and duties, enduring the like hardships and inconveniences with him.

It was expedient that our Redeemer should be God, that he might be able by his power to save us; to remove those huge obstacles that crossed our salvation, to subdue those potent enemies which opposed it; to command and conquer nature, to vanquish the powers of hell, to abolish death in our behalf.

It was requisite that he should be the co-essential natural Son of God, that by the nearness of his relation to God, by the supereminent dignity of his person, by the immense value of his merit he might conciliate God's favour to us, fully appease his wrath incensed against us, and satisfy his justice abused by our offences.

It was convenient, that his doctrine should carry with it the highest certainty and strongest efficacy; that his example should challenge the greatest regard and strictest imitation; that his laws should have supreme authority, and with greatest advantage oblige us; fit therefore it was that he should be God, and have the character of divinity stamped upon what he said and performed.

ST. LUKE II. 1—7.

The redemption and salvation of man did import an honour too august for any creature to be dignified with; it was a work too difficult and mighty for any but God to achieve; it was not proper that any creature should be principal in managing an affair of such height and importance; needful and expedient therefore it was, that our Saviour should be God.

It was also requisite, upon many accounts, that he should be man: that by perfectly obeying God's commands and submitting patiently to God's will as man, he might procure God's favour toward man; that as man had deeply wronged and offended God, so man also should highly content and please him; in St. Paul's language, that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man many should be made righteous." Decent it was that as man did approve, so man also should condemn sin in the flesh; that as man by wilful self-pleasing did incur misery, so by voluntary suffering he should recover happiness. "It did become him (as the Apostle saith), for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

It was also fit, that he who was designed to intercede for our welfare, to propitiate for our faults, to succour and relieve our distresses, should be tender of our good, and sensible of our needs; that he therefore should by nature and experience be nearly allied unto both parties; that consequently if possible (and what is to God, the author of this economy impossible?)

He should be both God and man; Son to God, and brother to us; the same in nature with God, in kind with us. Such reason and wisdom is discernible in this dispensation.

Now for the practical use of this doctrine; for it is not a doctrine merely speculative, and barren of fruit or practical use. It should, first, have a powerful influence on our minds, causing us, with high degrees of love and gratitude, to adore the infinite goodness of that God, who hath been pleased to stoop so low, that he might advance us from the lowest depth of meanness and wretchedness, to the highest pitch of honour and happiness, that we are capable of. What words can express, what thought can apprehend a favour so inconceivable, and ineffable? Well might St. Paul call it, "Love transcending all knowledge," well may heaven admire, and earth be astonished, and Hell tremble, at the disclosure of such a mystery, at the accomplishing such a miracle of grace and mercy; that the sovereign majesty of Heaven, the eternal Lord of glory, the World's great maker, the only Son of God, and heir of all things, should become a poor, small, weak, and frail man; should dwell in a tabernacle of flesh, should converse with silly, wretched and frail mortals here, should be exposed to want, disgrace and pain: O depth of goodness, and mercy unsearchable! If this will not, what consideration can raise us, what benefit can affect us? What prodigious ingratitude will it be, to be regardless, or insensible, of kindness so wonderful?

Another great use of this point

ST. LUKE II. 1—7.

is to engage us, as universally to all obedience, so particularly to the duties of humility, patience, and charity. Did the Son of God thus willingly submit, and so abase himself; and shall we then be refractory, shall we exalt ourselves; shall we refuse any appointment, or repine at any proceeding of God? Did he from the highest pitch of celestial glory, and voluntarily descend into this gloomy region, and state of ignoble obscurity; did he abandoning immense wealth, freely embrace extreme poverty; did he gladly sequester himself from those ineffable joys above, to converse with sorrow and sadness here, in this valley of tears for God's sake, and ours; and shall we be unwilling to do any thing for God's sake, or to part with any thing for Him? To these purposes doth St. Paul apply the consideration of this point: "Let the same mind (the same humble, patient, meek, charitable mind) be in you, which was in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God—emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant; being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death:" it was the greatest argument and instance of humility, patience and charity, that could be, for him, that did exist in the form of God, thus to debase himself to partake of our nature, and submit to our state: and "know (saith that Apostle again) the grace (or graciousness) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being himself rich, for your sake he became poor (being rich as God, and Lord of all things, to put himself into this

mean and poor condition of man) that ye, through his poverty, might be rich;" it was a consideration surely most proper to his purpose of inciting unto charity.

The consideration of this point should raise our minds to a sense of the dignity of our nature, accompanied with dispositions of heart, and deportments of life answerable thereto. By our Lord's incarnation our nature is so advanced, that we become nearly allied to God, of the blood-royal of heaven, in this respect overtopping all the creation of God; so that hereby, (as the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth) that of the Psalmist was verified, concerning man, "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:" the angels themselves cannot boast of such an honour; for "he took not the nature of angels, but he took the seed of Abraham." Being therefore so highly dignified, we should have a mind suitably great and noble, loving, delighting in, aiming at the most excellent things, void of base cares, of sordid desires, of unworthy designs: we should, in all our conversation, demean ourselves worthily and decently, like the brethren of Jesus, and children of God; and that we may not disparage and disgrace this illustrious alliance. As our Lord did vouchsafe, in most condescending grace, to resemble us, so should we, with a generous and honest ambition, aspire to resemble him; as he stooped to humanity, so let us rear ourselves to a kind of divinity, in purity of mind and sanctity of life; so Gregory Nisi-

anzen exhorteth ; “ Let us (saith he) be as Christ, since Christ is become like us ; let us, for his sake, be partakers of the divine nature, seeing he is become man for us.”—BARROW.

HYMN.

Let Christians all with one accord
Their loud Hosannahs sing,
To Him who unto them was born,
A Saviour and a King.

In lowest state the Lord of Heaven
His pilgrimage began ;
Fit lesson of humility
To his proud creature man.

Behold the child, the holy child,
Born to atone for sin ;
And let each ransom'd sinner's song
In gratitude begin.

Glory to God on high, on earth
Peace, and good will to men ;
And let the angels round the throne
Join in a loud Amen.

DAUBENY.

§ CLVII.

CHAP. II. 8—20.

One angel relateth Christ's nativity to the shepherds ; many sing praises to God for it.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping ¹ watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them : ² and they were sore afraid.

3 F

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, ³ which shall be to all people.

11 ⁴ For unto you is born this day in the city of David ⁵ a Saviour, ⁶ which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you ; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 ⁷ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

14 ⁸ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth ⁹ peace, ¹⁰ good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, ¹¹ the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 'But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

[Or, the night watches.—f ch. i. 12.—g Gen. xii. 3. Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark i. 15. ver. 31, 32. ch. xxiv. 47. Col. i. 23.—h Ia. ix. 6.—i Mat. i. 21.—k Mat. i. 16; & xvi. 16. ch. i. 43. Acts ii. 56; & x. 36. Phil. ii. 11.—l Gen. xxviii. 12; & xxxii. 1, 2. Ps. ciii. 20, 21; & cxlviii. 2. Dan. vii. 10. Heb. i. 14. Rev. v. 11.—m ch. xix. 36. Eph. i. 6; & iii. 10, 21. Rev. v. 18.—n Ia. lvii. 19. ch. i. 79. Rom. v. 1. Eph. ii. 17. Col. i. 20.—o John iii. 16. Eph. ii. 4, 7. 2 Thes. ii. 16. 1 John iv. 9, 10.—† Gr. *the men the shepherds.*—p Gen. xxxvii. 11. ch. i. 66. ver. 51.]

READER.—*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, &c.*—There never can be a greater occasion or juster cause of rejoicing than this, that our Lord is born and come. It is signally "good tidings;" never news more welcome hath come into the world; never report more grateful was heard by mortal ears. It is news from heaven, and the best that ever came thence. "Behold," said the angel that brought it, and a message it was most worthy the mouth of an angel, "I tell you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people;" news at which all heaven was pleased and ravished with joy, breaking presently forth into hymns of praise and congratulation; "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, and good will to men."—BARROW.

These are the best tidings that were ever heard in any age of the

world. O happy shepherds, to whom this news was sent down from heaven! Ye, to be sure, though watching in the fields, exposed to the severe cold of the night, were in this more happy than kings that slept at their ease in gilded beds, that the wonderful nativity of the supreme king, begotten from eternity, that nativity which brought salvation to the whole world, was first communicated to you, and just at the time it happened.

I believe there is none so stupid or insensible, as to deny that these tidings are very agreeable and pleasing to the ear. But we may, not without some reason, suspect of the greatest part of nominal Christians, who commonly receive these truths with great applause, that it may be said to them, without any injustice, "What is all this to you?" These privileges are truly great and manifold, and indifferently directed to all to whom they are preached, unless they reject them, and shut the door against happiness offering to come in: and this is not only the case of a great part of mankind, but they also impose upon themselves by false hopes, as if it were enough to hear of these great blessings, and dream themselves happy, because these sounds had reached their ears. But O unhappy men! what will all these immense riches signify to you, I must not indeed say, if you are not allowed to use them, but rather, if you know not how to avail yourselves of them?

I earnestly wish that these words of the Gospel were well fixed in

your minds, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."—

LEIGHTON.

And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Who now can complain of want, when he hears of his Lord and Saviour but thus provided for? He could have brought down with him a celestial house, and have pitched it here below, too glorious for earthly eyes to have looked upon: he could have commanded all the precious things that lie shrouded in the bowels of the earth to have made up a majestic palace for him, to the dazzling of the eyes of all beholders: he could have taken up the stateliest court that any earthly monarch possessed, for his peculiar habitation;—but his straitness was spiritual and heavenly; and he that owned all would have nothing; that he might sanctify want unto us, and that he might teach us, by his blessed example, to sit down contented with any thing, with nothing.

—HALL.

And suddenly there was with the angel, &c. It is observed by the doctors of the primitive ages, that, from the nativity of our Lord to the day of his death, the divinity and humanity did so communicate in effects, that no great action passed, but it was like the sun shining through a cloud, or a beauty with

a thin veil drawn over it; they gave illustration and testimony to each other. The holy Jesus was born a tender and a crying infant; but is adored by the magi as a king, by the angels as their God. He is circumcised as a man; but a name is given him to signify him to be the Saviour of the world. He is presented in the temple as the son of man; but by Simeon and Anna he is celebrated, with divine praises, for the Messias, the Son of God. He is baptized in Jordan as a sinner; but the Holy Ghost, descending upon him, proclaimed him to be the well beloved of God. He is hungry in the desert as a man; but sustained his body without meat and drink, for forty days together, by the power of his divinity: there he is tempted of Satan as a weak man, and the angels of light minister unto him as their supreme Lord. And a little before his death, when he was to take upon him all the affronts, miseries, and execrations of the most miserable, he receives testimonies from above, which are most wonderful; for he was transfigured upon Mount Tabor, entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, had the acclamations of the people; when he was dying, he darkened the sun; when he was dead, he opened the sepulchre; when he was fast nailed to the cross, he made the earth to tremble; and, when he suffers himself to be apprehended by a guard of soldiers, he strikes them all to the ground only by replying to their answer; that the words of the prophet might be

verified, "Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold it is I." Isaiah lii. 6.—TAYLOR.

The shepherds said one to another, let us now go even unto Bethlehem, &c. No sooner do the shepherds hear the news of a Saviour, than they run to Bethlehem to seek him. Those that left their beds to tend their flocks, leave their flocks to enquire after their Saviour. No earthly thing is too dear to be forsaken for Christ. If we suffer any worldly occasion to stay us from Bethlehem, we care more for our sheep than our souls. It is not possible that a faithful heart should hear where Christ is, and not labour after the sight, after the fruition of him. Where art thou, O Saviour, but at home in thine own house, the assembly of thy saints? Where art thou to be found, but in thy word and sacraments? Yea, there thou seekest for us: if there we haste not to seek for thee, we are worthy to want thee,—worthy that our want of thee here should make us want the presence of thy face for ever.—HALL.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. How should all the world blush at this indignity of Bethlehem! He that came to save men is sent, for his first lodging, to the beasts: the stable is become his inn, the crib his bed. O strange cradle of that great king, which heaven itself may envy! O Saviour, thou that wert both the maker and

owner of heaven, of earth, couldst have made thee a palace without hands, couldst have commanded thee an empty room in those houses which thy creatures had made. When thou didst but bid the angels void their first place, they fell down from heaven like lightning; and when, in thy humbled estate, thou didst but say, I am he, who was able to stand before thee? How easy had it been for thee to have made place for thyself in the throngs of the stateliest courts! Why wouldst thou be thus homely, but that, by contemning worldly glories, thou mightest teach us to contemn them, that thou mightest sanctify poverty to them whom thou calledst unto want! That, since thou, which hadst the choice of all earthly conditions, wouldst be born poor and despised, those which must want out of necessity might not think their poverty grievous! Here was neither friend to entertain, nor servant to attend, nor place wherein to be attended; only the poor beasts gave way to the God of all the world. It is the great mystery of godliness that God was manifested in the flesh, and seen of angels; but here, which was the top of all wonders, the very beasts might see their maker. For those spirits to see God in the flesh it was not so strange as for the brute creatures to see him which was the God of spirits. He that would be led into the wilderness amongst wild beasts to be tempted, would come into the house of beasts to be born, that from the height of

his divine glory his humiliation might be the greater. How can we be abased low enough for thee, O Saviour, that hast thus neglected thyself for us! That the visitation might be answerable to the homeliness of the place, attendants, provision, who shall come to congratulate his birth but poor shepherds? The kings of the earth rest at home, and have no summons to attend him, by whom they reign. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. In an obscure time, the night, unto obscure men, shepherds, doth God manifest the light of his Son, by glorious angels. It is not our meanness, O God, that can exclude us from the best of thy mercies; yea, thus far dost thou respect persons, that thou hast put down the mighty, and exalted them of low degree.—HALL.

HYMN.

Hark the herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the new-born king;
 Glory in the highest heaven,
 Peace on earth, and man forgiven."
 Joyful all ye nations, rise,
 Join the triumph of the skies;
 With th' angelic host proclaim
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Christ, by highest heaven ador'd,
 Christ, the everlasting Lord;
 Late in time behold him come
 Offspring of a Virgin's womb!
 Veil'd in flesh the Godhead see,
 Hail th' incarnate Deity!
 Pleas'd as man with men to dwell,
 Jesus our Immanuel.

Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace!
 Hail the Sun of righteousness!
 Light and life to all he brings,
 He'n with healing in his wings.

Mild, he lays his glory by,
 Born that man no more may die;
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth.

Come, desire of nations, come,
 Fix in us thy humble home;
 Rise, the woman's conquering seed,
 Bruise in us the serpent's head.
 Sing we then, with angels sing,
 Glory to the new-born king:
 Glory in the highest heaven,
 Peace on earth, and sins forgiven!

§ CLVIII.

CHAP. II. 21—38.

*Christ is circumcised. Mary purified.
 Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ.*

21 'And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called 'JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when 'the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to "that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair

of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, *⁠*waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not *⁠*see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came *⁠*by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, *⁠*now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes *⁠*have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 *⁠*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this *child* is set for the *⁠*fall and rising again of many

in Israel; and for *⁠*a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, *⁠*a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers *⁠*night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake to all them that *⁠*looked for redemption in *⁠*Jerusalem.

g Gen. xvii. 12. Lev. xii. 3; ch. i. 59.—Mat. i. 21. 28; ch. i. 31.—Lev. xii. 2, 3, 4, 6.—Ex. xiii. 2; & xxii. 29; & xxxiv. 19. Num. iii. 13; & viii. 17; & xvii. 16.—Lev. xii. 2, 6, 8.—Is. xl. 1. Mark xv. 43, ver. 28.—Pa. lxxviii. 26. Heb. xi. 6.—Mat. iv. 1.—Gen. xiv. 20. Phil. i. 23.—Is. lli. 10, ch. lii. 6.—Is. li. 2; & xlii. 6; & xlix. 6; & lx. 1, 2, 3. Mat. iv. 18. Acta xlii. 47; & xxviii. 28.—Is. viii. 14. Hos. xiv. 9. Mat. xii. 44. Rom. ix. 32, 33. 1 Cor. i. 28, 29. 2 Cor. ii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.—Acta xxviii. 22.—Pa. xlii. 10. John xii. 25.—g Acta xxvi. 7. 1 Tim. v. 5.—A Mark xv. 43, ver. xxv. ch. xxiv. 21.—I Or, Israel.

READER.—*And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child.*—He that came to be sin for us, would, in our persons, be legally unclean, that, by satisfying the law, he might take away our uncleanness. Though he were exempted from the common condition of our birth, yet he would not deliver himself from those ordinary rites

that implied the weakness and the blemishes of humanity. He would fulfil one law to abrogate it, another to satisfy it. He that was above the law would come under the law to free us from the law. Not a day would be changed, either in the circumcision of Christ, or the purification of Mary. Here was neither convenience of place, nor of necessities for so painful a work; yet he that made and gave the law will rather keep it with difficulty than transgress it with ease.—HALL.

His name was called Jesus. See Matthew iii. 20; and the commentary on that verse.

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, &c.—The law of purification proclaims our uncleanness. The mother is not allowed, after her childbirth, to come unto the sanctuary, or to touch any hallowed thing, until her time be expired. What are we, whose very birth infects the mother that bears us! At last she comes to the temple; but with sacrifices, either a lamb and a pigeon, or a turtle, or (in the meaner estate) two turtle-doves, or young pigeons, whereof one is for a burnt offering, the other for a sin offering: the one for thanksgiving, the other for expiation; for expiation of a double sin, of the mother and of the child.

We are all born sinners; and it is a just question whether we do more infect the world, or the world us. They are gross flatterers of nature that tell her she is clean. If our lives had no sin, we bring enough

with us: the very infant that lives not to sin as Adam, yet sinned in Adam and is sinful in himself. But, oh the unspeakable mercy of our God! we provide the sin, he provides the remedy.

Every poor mother was not able to bring a lamb for her offering: there was no one so poor, but might procure a pair of turtles or pigeons. Thus doth God both prescribe and accept from poorer hands, no less than the beasts of a thousand mountains. He looks for somewhat of every one, not of every one alike. Since it is he that makes differences of abilities, to whom it were as easy to make all rich, his mercy will make no difference in the acceptation. The truth and heartiness of obedience is that which he will crown in his meanest servants. A mite from the poor widow is more worth to him than the talents of the wealthy.

How glorious did the temple seem now that the owner was within the walls of it! Now was the hour and guest come, in regard whereof the second temple should surpass the first. This was his house, built for him, dedicated to him: there had he dwelt long in his spiritual presence, in his typical. There was nothing either placed or done within those walls wherein he was not resembled: and now the body of those shadows is come, and presents himself where he had been ever represented. Jerusalem is now every where. There is no church, no Christian heart, which is not a temple of the living God: there is no

temple of God wherein Christ is not presented to his Father. Look upon him, O God, in whom thou art well pleased, and in him and for him be well pleased with us!

Under the Gospel, we are all first-born, all heirs; every soul is to be holy unto the Lord: we are a royal generation, a holy priesthood. Our baptism, as it is our circumcision, and our sacrifice of purification, so it is also our presentation unto God. Nothing can become us but holiness. O God, to whom we are devoted, serve thyself of us, glorify thyself by us, till we shall by thee be glorified with thee.—HALL.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.—No man ever had or can have any right knowledge of the true God, but only by his Son our Saviour Christ. But by this means they that lived before might see him as by twilight; we who live after this sun is risen may see him by the clearest light that can be given of him; for he hath fully revealed and declared himself to us in the Gospel.

By this glorious light, we can see into the mystery of the eternal Trinity in Unity, so as to believe that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are One, one Jehovah, one God. That God the Father made all things at first by his Word, and still upholds and orders all things according to his will.

That God the Son was made flesh, became man, and as such died upon the cross, and so offered up himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; that he arose again, went up to heaven, and is now there at the right hand of God; that upon our repentance and faith in him our sins are pardoned, and he that made us is reconciled to us by the merits of his said death; that by the power of his intercession which he now makes in heaven for us, we are justified or accounted righteous in him, before him. That God the Holy Ghost abides continually with his church, moving upon, actuating and influencing, the means of grace that are there administered; that he sanctifies all that believe in Christ, leads them into all truth, comforts them in all their troubles, and assists them in doing whatsoever is required of them. These, and many such great and necessary truths, as lay in a great measure hid before, are now, by the light of the Sun of righteousness shining in his Gospel, made so plain and evident, that all may see them, except they wilfully shut their eyes or turn their backs upon them—BEVERIDGE.

Grace, and the Gospel that works it, compared with the dark night of nature, is the day; and it is often so called. But yet that same light of the Gospel shining to us in the word, and within us by the Spirit, is but the appearance or approaching of the day, a certain pledge of it, yea, a kind of beginning of it, telling us that it is hard at hand. It is one

and the same light: and when it enters into any soul, it makes sure that eternal full day to it, that it shall not be disappointed of, any more than the day can go back, and the sun fail to rise when the dawning is begun: and this begun light is still growing clearer, and tending to the perfect day.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Our eyes salvation see
Prepar'd by grace divine;
How wide its splendours are diffus'd!
How bright its glories shine!

Through distant heathen lands
It darts a vivid ray;
And to the realms where Satan reigned
Imparts celestial day.

The Israel of the Lord
In Christ their glory boast;
And on the honours of his name
Their whole salvation trust.

By him shall millions rise
To an immortal crown;
And millions that his grace despise
Shall sink in ruin down.

DODDRIDGE.

§ CLIX.

CHAP. II. 39—52.

Christ increaseth in wisdom; questioneth in the temple with the doctors; and is obedient to his parents.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 'And the child grew, and

3 q

waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem ^k every year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him, among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.

47 And 'all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

1 ver. 52. ch. i. 80.—2 Ex. xxiii. 15, 17; & xxiv. 28. Deut. xvi. 1. 16.—3 Mat. vii. 28. Mark i. 22. ch. iv. 22. 32. John vii. 15, 46.—4 John ii. 16.—5 ch. ix. 45; & xviii. 24.—6 ver. 19. Dan. vii. 28.—7 1 Sam. ii. 28. ver. 40.—8 Or, age.

READER.—*When he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.*—The child Jesus, in the minority of his age, went up with his parents to the holy solemnity; not this year only, but in all likelihood, others also. He, in the power of whose Godhead, and by the motion of whose Spirit, all others ascended thither, would not himself stay at home. In all his examples, he meant our instruction. This pious act of his non-age intended to lead our first years into timely devotion.—HALL.

And when they had fulfilled the days.—The blessed family came not to look at the feast and be gone; but they duly staid out the appointed days of unleavened bread. They, and the rest of Israel could not want household business at home; those secular affairs could

not either keep them from repairing to Jerusalem, or send them away immaturely. Worldly cares must give place to the sacred. Except we will depart unblest, we must attend God's services till we may receive his dismissal.—HALL.

As they returned. The feast ended, what should they do but return to Nazareth? God's services may not be so attended, as that we should neglect our particular callings. They are foully mistaken, that think God cares for no other trade but devotion; piety and diligence must keep meet changes with each other. Neither doth God less accept of our return to Nazareth than our going up to Jerusalem.—HALL.

The child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.—I cannot think that the blessed Virgin, or good Joseph, could be so negligent of their divine charge, as not to call the child Jesus to their setting forth from Jerusalem. But their back was no sooner turned upon the temple, than his face was towards it. He had business in that place when theirs was ended; there he was both worshipped and represented. He in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily could do nothing without God; his true father led him away from his supposed. Sometimes the affairs of our ordinary vocation may not grudge to yield to spiritual occasions.—HALL.

But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey.—It was the fashion of those

times and places, that they went up, and so returned, by troops, to these set meetings of their holy festivals. The whole parish of Nazareth went and came together. Good fellowship doth no way so well as in the passage to heaven; much comfort is added by society to that society which of itself is pleasant. It is a happy word "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord." Mutual encouragement is none of the least benefit of our holy assemblies. Many sticks laid together make a good fire, which, if they be single, lose both their light and heat.—HALL.

And they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. (Sorrowing. ver. 48). O dear Saviour, who can miss and not mourn for thee? Never any soul conceived thee by faith, that was less afflicted with the sense of thy desertion than comforted with the joy of thy presence. Just is that sorrow, and those tears reasonable, that are bestowed upon thy loss. What comfort are we capable of, while we want thee? What relish is there in these earthly delights without thee? What is there to mitigate our passionate discomforts, if not from thee? Let thyself loose, O my soul, to the fulness of sorrow, when thou findest thyself bereaved of him, in whose presence is fulness of joy; and deny to receive comfort from any thing, save from his return.—HALL.

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. In vain is Christ sought among his kindred according to the flesh: so far are they still from giving us

their aid to find the true Messiah, that they lead us from him. Back again, therefore, are Joseph and Mary gone to seek him at Jerusalem. She goes about in the city, by the streets, and by the open places, and seeks him whom her soul loveth: she sought him for the time and found him not.

O Saviour, thou hast said, and cannot lie, "I am with you to the end of the world:" but even while thou art really present, thou thinkest good to be absent to our apprehensions. Yet, if thou leave us, thou wilt not forsake us; if thou leave us for our humiliation, thou wilt not forsake us to our final discomfort.—HALL.

And it came to pass, after that three days, they found him in the temple. O Saviour, thou mayest for three days hide thyself, but then we shall find thee in the temple. None ever sought thee with a sincere desire of whom thou wert not found. Thou wilt not be either so little absent as not to whet our appetites, nor so long as to fainten the heart.—O all ye that are grieved with the want of your Saviour, see where ye must seek him! In vain shall ye hope to find him in the streets, in the taverns, in the theatres, seek him in his holy temple, seek him with piety, seek him with faith; there shall ye meet him, there shall ye recover him.—HALL.

Sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions.—While children of that age were playing in the streets, Christ was found sitting in the temple; not to gaze on the outward glory of that

house, or on the golden candlesticks or tables, but to hear and oppose the doctors. He who, as God, gave them all the wisdom they had, as the Son of Man hearkens to the wisdom he had given them. He who sat in their hearts as the author of all learning and knowledge, sits in the midst of their school as an humble disciple: that, by learning of them, he might teach all the younger sort humility, and due attendance upon their instructors. He could at the first have taught the great rabbins of Israel the deep mysteries of God: but because he was not yet called by his Father to the public function of a teacher, he contents himself to hear with diligence, and to ask with modesty, and to teach only by insinuation. Let those consider this which needs run as soon as they can go; and, when they find ability, think they need not stay for a further vocation of God or men.—HALL.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. Their eyes saw nothing but human weakness, their ears heard divine sublimity of matter; betwixt what they saw, and what they heard, they could not but be distracted with a doubting admiration. And why did ye not, O ye Jewish teachers, remember, that "to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?" Why did ye not now bethink yourselves, what the star, the sages, the angels, the shepherds,

Zachary, Simeon, Anna, had premised you? Fruitless is the wonder that endeth not in faith; no light is sufficient where the eyes are held through unbelief or prejudice. HALL.

And when they saw him, they were amazed; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing. Questionless, this gracious saint would not, for all the world, have willingly preferred her own attendance to that of her God: through heedlessness she does so. Her Son and Saviour is her monitor, out of his divine love reforming her natural. *How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* Immediately before, the blessed Virgin had said, "Thy father and I have sought thee." Wherein, both according to the supposition of the world she calls Joseph the father of Christ, and, according to the fashion of a dutiful wife she names her Joseph before herself. She well knew that Joseph had nothing but a name in this business; she knew how God had dignified her beyond him; yet she says, Thy father and I sought thee. The Son of God stands not upon contradiction to his mother, but, leading her thoughts from his supposed father to his true, from earth to heaven, he answers, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" How well contented was holy Mary with so just an answer. How doth she now again, in her heart, renew her answer to the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word!"

ST. LUKE III. 1—14.

We are all the the sons of God in another kind. Nature and the world think we should attend them. We are not worthy to say we have a Father in heaven, if we cannot steal away from these earthly distractions, and employ ourselves in the services of our God.—HALL.

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. Christ submitted in his humanity to a state of infancy; sanctifying that state, and shewing that, as an infant was yet, in title, king and head of the church, so infants may be members of him and it. He also, in his childhood, subjected himself to his supposed father, and to his mother, reverencing them, and obeying them, both as part of his meritorious humiliation, and to sanctify a state of subjection, and become a pattern thereof to us all. And it will greatly condemn proud rebellious children and youth who will not obey the just government of parents (but their fleshly appetites and lusts), that the Son of God incarnate condescended to subjection.

Mary's laying up all these sayings was the working of her faith and hope, perceiving that God was going on to fulfil the promises made to her.—BAXTER.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.—His human nature increased, as in stature, so in actual human knowledge, and its habits, knowing more as man than he knew in infancy. And God, who by way of approbation

and complacence loveth all things so far as they are lovely, so approved and loved his humanity more, as it grew more in act and habit towards perfection.—BAXTER.

HYMN.

Eternal source of ev'ry joy,
Well may thy praise our lips employ;
While in thy Temple we appear
Whose goodness crowns the circling year.

Seasons and months, and weeks and days,
Demand successive songs of praise;
Still be the cheerful homage paid
With opening light, and evening shade.

Here in thy house shall incense rise
As circling sabbaths bless our eyes;
Still will we make thy mercies known
Around thy board, and round our own.

O may our more harmonious tongues
In worlds unknown pursue the songs;
And in those brighter courts adore,
Where days and years revolve no more.

DODDRIDGE.

§ CLX.

CHAP. III. 1—14.

The preaching and baptism of John,

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene.

2 "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word

of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3 ^b And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance ^c for the remission of sins ;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, ^d The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth ;

6 And ^e all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, ^f O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits ^g worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : ^h every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

494

10 And the people asked him, saying, ⁱ What shall we do then ?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, ^j He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then ^k came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do ?

13 And he said unto them, ^l Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do ? And he said unto them, ^m Do violence to no man, ⁿ neither accuse *any* falsely ; and be content with your ^o wages.

^e John xi. 49, 51 ; & xviii. 13. Acts iv. 6.—^f Mat. iii. 1. Mark i. 4.—^g ch. i. 77.—^h Is. xl. 3. Mat. iii. 2. Mark i. 3. John i. 23.—ⁱ Ps. xcvi. 2. Is. lli. 19. ch. ii. 10.—^j Mat. iii. 7.—^k Or, *meat* for.—^l Mat. vii. 12.—^m Acts ii. 27.—ⁿ ch. xi. 41. 2 Cor. viii. 14. Jam. ii. 13, 16. 1 John iii. 17 ; & iv. 20.—^o Mat. xxi. 22. ch. vii. 23.—^p ch. xix. 8.—^q Or, *Put no man to fear.*—^r Ex. xxiii. 1. Lev. xix. 11.—^s Or, *allowance.*

See § X.

Matthew III. 1—12.

§ CLXI.

CHAP. III. 15—20.

John's testimony of Christ. Herod imprisoneth John.

15 And as the people were ^a in expectation, and all men

‘mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not ;

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, “ I indeed baptize you with water ; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire :

17 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and ° will gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 † But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip’s wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

¹ Or, *in suspense*.—¹ Or, *reasoned, or, debated*.—ⁿ Mat. iii. 11.—^e Mic. iv. 12. Mat. xiii. 30.—^p Mat. xiv. 3. Mark vi. 17.

READER.—*John answered, saying unto them all, &c.* John did every way forerun Christ, not so much in the time of his birth, as in his office. Neither was there more unlikeness in their disposition and carriage, than similitude in their function. Both did preach and baptize : only John baptized by himself, our Saviour by his disciples : our

Saviour wrought miracles by himself, by his disciples ; John wrought none by either. Wherein Christ meant to show himself a lord, and John a servant ; and John meant to approve himself a true servant to him whose harbinger he was.

It was fit that he which had the prophets, the star, the angel, to foretell his coming into the world, should have his usher to go before him when he would notify himself to the world. John was the voice of a crier ; Christ was the Word of his Father. It was fit this voice should make a noise to the world, ere the Word of the Father should speak to it. John’s note was still repentance. The axe to the root, the fan to the floor, the chaff to the fire. As his raiment was rough, so was his tongue ; and if his food was wild honey, his speech was stinging locusts. Thus must the way be made for Christ in every heart. Plausibility is no fit preface to regeneration. If the heart of man had continued upright, God might have been entertained without contradiction : but now violence must be offered to our corruption ere we can have room for grace. If the great way-maker do not cut down hills, and raise up valleys, in the bosoms of men, there is no passage for Christ. Never will Christ come into that soul, where the herald of repentance hath not been before him.—HALL.

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner ; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. The visible kingdom of God

upon earth is but an imperfect state and condition ; for, though all that are members of it are selected and taken out of the world, yet there is a great deal of mixture and dross, and many things that do offend. For,

First ; there is a mixture of wicked persons with those who are really holy. Many belong to it only because their consciences are convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, although their lives are not subject to the power of it ; and these are taken out of the world only as they are brought into the pale of the church, and profess the name of Christ and his religion, as distinct from all other religions in the world. And therefore we find the church, or the kingdom of heaven, in scripture, frequently compared to a net cast into the sea, gathering every kind of fish, both good and bad, Matt. xiii. 47. Bothsorts are embraced in the bosom of this net, and no perfect separation can be made, until it be drawn to shore at the day of judgment ; and then the good will be gathered into vessels, and the bad cast away, as it is there expressed. Again, it is compared to a floor, wherein is both chaff and wheat ; and these will be mixed together until the last discriminating day, and then shall the wheat be gathered into the garner, and the chaff burned up with unquenchable fire.—Again, it is compared to a field, wherein grow tares as well as corn, Matt. xiii. 24—25 ; which must grow together until the harvest, and then shall the tares be bound in bundles

to be burned, and the profitable grain be gathered into the barn. This hath been, and will be, the mixed condition of God's church on earth ; wherein, through hypocrisy and gross dissimulation, many that are enemies to the cross of Christ will yet go under that cognizance, and keep up a form of godliness, though they deny and hate the power thereof.

Secondly : There is even in the invisible church here on earth a great mixture too ; those who have a real and vital union to Christ, and maintain a spiritual union with him, yet even they have a sad mixture of evil in all their good, of sin with all their grace and holiness, so that the church is still imperfect, not only from a mixture of persons, but from a mixture in persons ; as we know but in part, so we love but in part, we fear, we obey God, but in part. And with our profession of faith we have need also to prefer that humble petition, "Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief." Mark ix. 24—HOPKINS.

*Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done. (See Matthew xiv. 1—12, with the commentary ; § 47) added yet this above all that he shut up John in prison.—*We commonly reckon the greatness of sin by the abruptness of our advance to it. Possibly, it would seem a horrid thing, at the first rising of a temptation in our hearts, if we should presently perpetrate the utmost of it into act. Therefore, the method of sin is more

ST. LUKE III. 21—38.

smooth and deceitful; it counts a sinful thought a little transgression, and sinful discourse to have but a little more guilt in it than a sinful thought, and sinful actions to have but a little more guilt in them than sinful words; a great sin but in a little degree exceeds the less; and so, comparing sin with sin, and not with the law, we at length come, by invisible advances, to look upon the greatest impieties in the world to be but little sins, and so to commit them. If Satan prevails with us to go with him one step out of our way, we are in danger to stop no where till we come to the height of all profaneness; he will make us take a second, and a third, and so to travel on to destruction, for each of these is but one step as well as the first; and if the devil prevail with us to take one step, why should he not prevail with us to take the last step as well as the first step, seeing it is but one? Your second sin no more exceeds your first, than your first doth your duty; and so of the rest.—HOPKINS.

PSALM XXXVI.

When man grows bold in sin
My heart within me cries
"He hath no faith of God within,
No fear before his eyes."

His heart is false and foul
His words are smooth and fair,
Wisdom is banish'd from his soul,
And leaves no goodness there.

But there's a righteous God
Though men renounce his fear;
His Justice, hid behind the cloud,
Shall one great day appear.

3 R

His truth transcends the sky,
In heaven his mercies dwell;
Deep as the sea his judgments lie,
His anger turns to hell.

How excellent his love,
Whence all our safety springs;
O never let my soul remove
From underneath his wings.

WATTS.

§ CLXII.

CHAP. III. 21—38.

Christ baptized receiveth testimony from heaven. The age and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upwards.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, 'it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

23 And Jesus himself began to be 'about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) 'the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli,

24 Which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph.

497

25 Which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the son* of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge,

26 Which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda,

27 Which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri,

28 Which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er,

29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi,

30 Which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of

Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of 'Nathan, " which was *the son* of David,

32 * Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naason,

33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda,

34 Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, ' which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,

35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala,

36 * Which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, * which was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,

37 Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of

Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,

38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, ⁴ which was *the son* of God.

9 Mat. iii. 13. John i. 82.—7 See Num. iv. 3, 35, 39, 43, 47.—8 Mat. xiii. 55. John vi. 42.—9 Zech. xii. 12.—10 78 am. v. 14. 1 Chr. iii. 5.—11 Ruth iv. 18, &c.—12 Chr. ii. 10, &c.—13 Gen. xi. 24, 26.—14 See Gen. xi. 12.—15 Gen. v. 4, &c.; & xi. 10, &c.—16 Gen. v. 1, 2.

See § § II. XI.

Matthew I. 1—17. III. 13—17.

§ CLXIII.

CHAP. IV. 1—13.

The temptation and fasting of Christ. He overcometh the devil.

AND ¹ Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and ² was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And ³ in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, ⁴ It is written, That man

shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee and the glory of them: for ⁵ that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt ⁶ worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for ⁷ it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 ⁸ And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For ⁹ it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, ¹⁰ It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for ^a a season.

Mat. iv. 1. Mark i. 12.—^b ver. 14. ch. ii. 27.—^c Ex. xxxiv. 29. 1 Kings xix. 8.—^d Deut. viii. 3.—^e John xii. 31; & xiv. 30. Rev. xiii. 2. 7.—^f Or, *fall down before me*.—^g Deut. vi. 13; & x. 20.—^h Mat. iv. 5.—ⁱ Ps. xvi. 11.—^j Deut. vi. 16.—^k John xiv. 30. Heb. iv. 15.

See § XII.

Matthew IV. 1—11.

§ CLXIV.

CHAP. IV. 14—32.

Christ beginneth to preach. The people of Nazareth admire his gracious words.

14 ¶ And Jesus returned ^m in the power of the Spirit into ⁿ Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 ¶ And he came to ^o Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, ^p he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 ^q The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are buised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and ^r wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, ^s Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in ^t thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No ^u prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, ^v many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years

and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

1 Mat. iv. 12. John iv. 43.—m ver. 1.—a Acts x. 37.—c Mat. ii. 23; & xlii. 54. Mark vi. 1.—p Acts xlii. 14; & xvii. 2.—q Is. lxi. 1.—r Ps. xlv. 2. Mat. xlii. 54. Mark vi. 2. ch. ii. 47.—s Job. vi. 42.—t Mat. iv. 13; & xi. 23. u Mat. xlii. 54. Mark vi. 1.—v Mat. xlii. 57. Mark vi. 4. John iv. 44.—y 1 Kings xvii. 9; & xviii. 1. James v. 17.—z 2 Kings v. 14.—|| Or, edge.—a John viii. 59; & x. 39.—b Mat. iv. 13. Mark i. 21.—c Mat. vi. 23, 29. Titus ii. 16.

READER.—*He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.—As his custom was, he went into the synagogue*

on the sabbath day.—Although our Saviour took all occasions to instruct and admonish his disciples and followers, whether in the fields or upon the mountains, in private houses, even wheresoever he could find an opportunity to do it; yet upon sabbath-days he always frequented the public worship of God,—he went into the synagogues, places appointed for public prayers and reading and hearing the word;—a thing which I fear many amongst us do not think of, or at least not rightly consider it, for if they did, they would not dare meddles to walk so directly contrary to our blessed Saviour in this particular.

We may observe that our Saviour did not go into a synagogue or church by the bye, to see what they were doing there; neither did he happen to go in by chance upon the sabbath-day; but it was his custom and constant practice to do so, even to go each sabbath-day to the public ordinances, there to join with the congregation in performing their service and devotions to Almighty God. And here I must take leave to say, that was there no other law, nor any other obligation upon us, (as there be many) to frequent the public worship of God, this practice and example of our blessed Saviour doth sufficiently and effectually oblige us all to a constant attendance upon the public ordinances. For, as we are Christians, and profess ourselves to be his disciples, we are all bound to follow him, he commands us here and elsewhere to do it; and

certainly there is nothing that we can be obliged to follow him in, more than in the manner of his worshipping God. And therefore, whosoever out of any humour, fancy, or slothfulness, shall presume to neglect the public worship of God, he doth not only act contrary to Christ's example, but transgresses also his command that enjoins him to follow that example. What they who are guilty of this, will have to answer for themselves, when they come to stand before Christ's tribunal, I know not. But this I know, that all those who profess themselves to be Christians should follow Christ in all things that they can, and by consequence in this particular; and that they sin who do not.—BEVERIDGE.

He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.—The completion of the prophecy affords strong consolation to us. We are here taught to regard Jesus as the anointed of God, sent from above, and as bringing with him the gracious offers of pardon for the guilty, peace for the miserable, and salvation for those "who are ready to perish." In this representation the sinful, depraved, and helpless condition of man is clearly implied; and the blessings of redemption are freely proposed to the acceptance of all who feel and lament the melancholy truth. If we pride ourselves on any fancied goodness or ability of our own, we grossly mistake our case, and overlook the grand peculiarities of the Gospel; nor can we receive those important

benefits which Jesus came to bestow. He gives wisdom to the ignorant, righteousness to the guilty, sanctification to the unholy, and redemption to the miserable captive. But he confers no favour on the proud and self sufficient, who, not being sensible of their own necessities, will not submit or apply to him.

We ask, then, are you "the poor" of whom the prophet speaks, poor, in a spiritual sense, as perceiving yourselves destitute of every thing really excellent? The Gospel proclaims glad tidings in your ears: Jesus brings a message of mercy to you, and bids you take "the unsearchable riches" of his grace.

Or, are you distressed in mind, not on account of worldly losses, but from a conviction of your guilt and danger? Is your anguish extreme, so that under the rebuke of God's displeasure you cry out, "Thy rebuke hath broken my heart?" Jesus is commissioned to administer suitable and adequate relief. He will "bind up your wounds pouring in oil and wine"; and will continue his kind attentions to you till the cure be perfected. It is his peculiar office to "heal the broken hearted."

Do you fear that the sentence of condemnation is gone forth against you, and that you are detained as "prisoners" in the hands of divine justice? Such, indeed, is your natural state; nor is there any escape possible, but by the gracious interposition of Jesus. He grants "deliverance to the captives," cancels the sentence, and proclaims a full forgiveness. Or do you bewail

your spiritual bondage, under the oppression of those enemies to whom you have long been subject, and who are too strong for you? On this account also, we would direct you to look to Jesus, who alone can rescue you from this miserable servitude. He calls upon you to assert your freedom; for he says to the prisoners "Go forth;" to them that are in darkness, "Shew yourselves." (Isa. xlix. 9.)

You are distressed, perhaps, by your extreme ignorance in divine things, and lament that all appears darkness and confusion to your minds. It may be that you had conceived highly of your own discernment, but are now free to confess that you are spiritually blind. It is a happy change. While you said "We see" you would have spurned at the proposal of any one to open your eyes. Now you cannot but welcome the Saviour, who "recovers the sight;" and exhorts you to "anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see." Rev. iii. 18.

Yet, after various struggles and painful conflicts, your distress may probably increase, if no sensible deliverance be wrought for you; and every attempt to gain your liberty may make your chains the more galling and insupportable. You are therefore fitly described as being "bruised" with your fetters. But, though you are heavily oppressed, and unable to extricate yourselves, your case is not desperate. Jesus appears with a powerful arm which shall be exerted on your behalf. He not only gives

you permission to go forth, but he will himself break your bonds in sunder, release you from the tyranny of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and make you free indeed.

Should the desponding fear arise, "We have sinned so long and so presumptuously, that mercy cannot now be extended to us, the time of grace is expired,—this great prophet of our God will quiet your apprehension, while he preaches "the acceptable year of the Lord." In his name we can assure you, that if you return to your offended God you shall find a favourable reception. He waits to pardon and to bless you. This is the happy season prefigured by the ancient jubilee: the proclamation of the Gospel, like the joyful sound of the trumpet among the Israelites, declares that your debt is cancelled, the appointed hour of your enlargement is come, and your inheritance shall be restored. "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation."

Such is the purport of that important prophecy which our Lord applied to himself, and on which he insisted in his preaching to the Nazarenes.—ROBINSON.

And all bare him witness, and wondered, &c.—They were struck with wonder; the dignity and grace of the speaker made a strong impression upon their minds. But admiration was all: they did not seriously consider his words, or believe his declarations. Their prejudices immediately appeared; and

they began to cavil at the meanness of his birth and extraction. He knew what was in their hearts, and addressed them, probably with a particular reference to their very thoughts concerning him. He gave them to understand that he was aware of their objection to his family and education, and that he expected they would demand from him the same miraculous operations which he had wrought at Capernaum. But he warned them not to reject the evidence offered to themselves while he maintained that God, as a sovereign Arbiter, is not accountable to any one; and that he has a right to dispense his favours as he pleases. Accordingly, many perish who are placed in the most advantageous circumstances; and mercy is extended to others at a distance, whom we should not have thought of. Thus he observed to them that a poor Gentile widow was relieved by Elijah, while many widows in Israel were left to suffer all the severities of famine;—a stranger and an enemy to Israel was cured of his leprosy by Elisha, though the same dreadful disease continued to prey upon many others in the very country and under the immediate notice of the prophet. He intimated, then, that the grace of the gospel might be sent to some remote kingdom, even among the heathens, and that they themselves might never experience the blessing, but be destroyed through their unbelief.

This was more than they could bear: “they were filled with wrath;”

and the violence of their conduct soon discovered the enmity of their hearts. Ah! foolish people and unwise, who so rashly rejected the Saviour! We might be constrained to weep over their sad case: but it will become us rather to be anxiously concerned for ourselves. What reception does Jesus meet with among ourselves? His gospel excites the admiration of many who know no more of it than the Nazarenes. They soon begin to cavil and urge a variety of objections. It is in vain to answer; nay, perhaps the most temperate reply will increase their violence: nor would it be surprising, if the ministers of Christ, like their Lord and Master, should be driven away with contempt and abhorrence. Ah! what availed it to live at Nazareth, to be near to Jesus, to observe his holy conduct, and to hear his gracious words? Or what avails it now to be placed within the notice of the most excellent persons, and under the most lively ordinances of religion? Even in such circumstances, you may feel a vehement hatred of the truth. But beware: whilst you endeavour to get rid of that which gives you pain, you are rejecting your best mercies, and destroying your immortal souls.—ROBINSON.

HYMN.

Jesus! transporting sound!
The joy of earth and heaven!
No other help is found;
No other name is given
By which we can salvation have;
But thou didst come the world to save.

Thy name the sinner hears,
And is from sin set free ;
'Tis music in his ears,
'Tis life and victory :
New songs of praise his lips employ,
And leaps his heart with holy joy.

Oh, unexampled love !
Oh, rich redeeming grace !
How swiftly didst thou move,
To save a fallen race !
How shall we make the tidings known,
Of what thy love, thy grace, has done ?

Oh, for a trumpet's voice
On the whole world to call,
To bid their hearts rejoice,
In Him who "died for all!"
Let each the joyful news proclaim
Till every sinner hears his name.

WESLEY.

§ CLXV.

CHAP. IV. 33—44.

Christ cureth one possessed of a devil, Peter's mother-in-law, and divers other sick persons. The devils acknowledge Christ, and are reprov'd for it. He preaches throughout the cities.

33 ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? 'I know thee who thou art; 'the Holy One of God.

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when

3 s

the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 ¶ Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought

505

him and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44 ^m And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

d Mark i. 23.—f Or, *Away*.—e ver. 41.—f Ps. xvi. 10. Dan. ix. 24. ch. i. 36.—g Mat. viii. 14. Mark i. 29.—h Mat. viii. 16. Mark i. 32.—i Mark i. 34; & iii. 11.—k Mark i. 26, 34. ver. 34, 35.—l Or, *to say that they knew him to be Christ*.—l Mark i. 35.—m Mark i. 39.

See § XXIX.

Matthew VIII. 14—17.

And § XXX.

Matthew VIII. 28—34.

§ CLXVI.

CHAP. V. 1—11.

Christ teacheth the people out of Peter's ship: in a miraculous taking of fishes, sheweth how he will make him and his partners fishers of men.

AND ^a it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the

land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, ^b Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, ^c Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; ^d from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

ST. LUKE V. 1—11.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

a Mat. iv. 18. Mark i. 16.—b John xxi 6.—c 2 Sam. vi. 9. 1 Kings xvii. 18.—d Mat. iv. 19. Mark i. 17.—e Mat. iv. 20; & xix. 27. Mark i. 18. ch. xviii. 28.

READER.—*The people pressed upon him to hear the word of God.*—As the sun, in his first rising, draws all eyes to it, so did this sun of righteousness, when he first shone forth into the world. His miraculous cures drew patients, his divine doctrine drew auditors, both together drew the admiring multitude by troops after him. And why do we not still follow thee, O Saviour, through deserts and mountains, over land and seas, that we may be both healed and taught? It was thy word that when thou wert lift up, thou wouldest draw all men unto thee. Behold, thou art lift up long since, both to the tree of shame, and to the throne of heavenly glory! “Draw us, and we shall run after thee.” Thy word is still the same, though proclaimed by men; thy virtue is still the same, though exercised upon the spirits of men. O give us to hunger after both, that by both our souls may be satisfied!

Our Saviour did not check the unreverend thronging of the people, but rather encourages their forwardness. We cannot offend thee, O God, with the importunity of our desires. It likes thee well, that the kingdom of heaven should suffer violence. Our slackness doth ever displease thee, never our vehemency.

—HALL.

He stood by the lake of Genesaret,

and saw two ships standing by the lake; but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.—Even those nets that caught nothing must be washed, no less than if they had sped well. The night’s toil doth not excuse the day’s work. Little did Simon think of leaving those nets which he so carefully washed; and now Christ interrupts him with the favour and blessing of his gracious presence. Labour in our calling, how homely soever, makes us capable of divine benediction.—HALL.

And he entered into one of the ships, &c.—The throng of auditors forced Christ to leave the shore, and to make Peter’s ship his pulpit. Never were there such nets cast out of that fisher-boat before. While he was upon the land he healed sick bodies by his touch; now that he is upon the sea, he cured sick souls by his doctrine; and is purposely severed from the multitude, that he may unite them to him.—HALL.

And when he had left speaking, he saith unto Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.—Simon hath no sooner done this service to Christ, than Christ is preparing for his reward.—It had been as easy for our Saviour to have brought the fish to Peter’s ship, close to the shore; yet as choosing rather to have the ship carried to the shoal of fish, he bids “Launch forth into the deep.” In his miracles he loves ever to meet nature in her bounds; and when she hath done her best, to supply the rest by his overruling power.—HALL.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.—The night was the fittest time for the hopes of their trade: not unjustly might Simon misdoubt his speed by day, when he had worn out the night in unprofitable labour. Sometimes God crosseth the fairest of our expectations, and gives a blessing to those times and means whereof we despair. That pains cannot be cast away which we resolve to lose for Christ. O God, how many do I see casting out their nets in the great lake of the world, which in the whole night of their life have caught nothing! “O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after lies?” Yet, if we have thus vainly misspent the time of our darkness, let us, at the command of Christ, cast out our new-washen nets; and our humble and penitent obedience shall come home laden with blessings.—HALL.

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.—What a difference there is betwixt our own voluntary acts, and those that are done by command; not more in the grounds of them than in the issue. Those are oftentimes fruitless; these are ever successful. Never man threw out his net at the word of his Saviour, and drew it back empty. Who would not obey thee, O Christ, since thou dost so bountifully requite our weakest services!

It was not mere retribution that was intended in this event, but in-

struction also: this act was not without a mystery. He that should be made a fisher of men shall, in this draught, foresee his success. “The kingdom of heaven is like a draw-net cast into the sea, which, when it is full, men draw to land.” The very first draught that Peter made, after the complement of his apostleship, enclosed no less than three thousand souls. O powerful Gospel, that can fetch sinful men out of the depths of natural corruption! O happy souls, that, from the blind and muddy cells of our wicked nature, are drawn forth to the glorious liberty of the sons of God!—HALL.

And they beckoned unto their partners, &c.—Wherefore hath God given us partners, but that we should beckon to them for aid on necessary occasions? Neither doth Simon slacken his hand because he had assistants. What shall we say to those lazy fishers who can set others to the drag while themselves look on at ease, caring only to feed themselves with the fish, not willing to wet their hands with the net?

What shall we say to this excess of gain? The nets brake, the ships sink with their burden. O happy complaint of too large a capture! O Saviour, if those apostolic vessels of the first rigging were thus overlaid, ours float and totter with a ballasted lightness. Thou, who art no less present in these ships of ours, lade them with an equal fraught of converted souls, and let us praise thee for their sinking!—HALL.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart

ST. LUKE V. 1—11.

from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.—It had been pity the honest fisherman should have been taken at his word. O Simon, thy Saviour is come into thine own ship to call thee, to call others by thee unto blessedness; and dost thou say, Lord, go from me? As, if the patient should say to the physician, Depart from me, for I am sick! It was the voice of astonishment, not of dislike; the voice of humility, not of discontentment: yea, because thou art a sinful man, therefore hath thy Saviour need to come to thee, to stay with thee; and because thou art humble in the acknowledgment of thy sinfulness, therefore Christ delights to abide with thee, and will call thee to abide with him.

No man ever fared the worse for abasing himself to his God. Christ hath left many a soul for forward and unkind usage: never any for the disparagement of itself, and entreaties of humility.—HALL.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not.—O my soul, be not weary of complaining of thine own wretchedness; disgrace thyself to him who knows thy vileness; be astonished at those mercies which have shamed thine ill deservings. The Saviour hath no power to go away from a prostrate heart. He that resists the proud, heartens the lowly.

Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.—Lo, this humility is rewarded with an apostleship. What had the earth evermore glorious than a legacy from heaven? He that bade Christ go from him, shall have the honour to go first on this happy

errand. This was a trade that Simon had no skill of: it could not but be enough to him that Christ said, "I will make thee;" the miracle shewed him able to make good his word. He that hath power to command the fishes to be taken, can easily enable the hands to take them.

The world is a sea; souls, like fishes, swim at liberty in the deep; the nets of wholesome doctrine draw up some to the shore of grace and glory. "Who is sufficient for these things?" This sea, these nets, the fishers, the fish, the vessels, are all thine, O God; do what thou wilt in us and by us! Give us ability and grace to take; give men will and grace to be taken; and take thou glory by what thou hast given.—HALL.

HYMN.

Be with me, Lord, where'er I go,
Teach me what thou would'st have me do;
Suggest whate'er I think or say,
Direct me in thy narrow way.

Prevent me, lest I harbour pride,
Lest I in my own strength confide;
Shew me my weakness; let me see,
I have my power, my all, from thee.

O may I ne'er my silence break,
Unless inspir'd by thee to speak;
Then let such power attend my word,
That all who hear may seek the Lord.

Assist and teach me how to pray,
Incline my nature to obey;
What thou abhorr'st, that let me flee,
And only love what pleases Thee.

§ CLXVII.

CHAP. V. 12—17.

Christ cleanseth the leper ; prayeth in the wilderness.

12 ¶ ^f And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy : who seeing Jesus fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will : be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 ^g And he charged him to tell no man : but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, ^h according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them :

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him : ⁱ and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 ¶ ^k And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every

town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem : and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

^f Mat. viii. 2. Mark i. 40.—^g Mat. viii. 4.—^h Lev. xiv. 4, 10, 21, 22.—ⁱ Mat. iv. 23. Mark iii. 7. Joh. vi. 2.—^k Mat. xiv. 23. Mark vi. 46.

See § XXVIII.

Matthew VIII. 1—4.

§ CLXVIII.

CHAP. V. 18—32.

Christ healeth one sick of the palsy ; calleth Matthew the publican ; eateth with sinners as being the physician of souls.

18 ¶ ^l And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy : and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.

19 And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 ^m And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies ? ⁿ Who

can forgive sins, but God alone ?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts ?

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thysins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk ?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

27 ¶ ° And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom : and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 ° And Levi made him a great feast in his own house : and ° there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But the scribes and Pha-

risees ; murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners ?

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

32 ° I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

1 Mat. ix. 2. Mark ii. 3.—m Mat. ix. 3. Mark ii. 6, 7. n Pa. xxxii. 5. 1a. xliii. 25.—o Mat. ix. 9. Mark ii. 13, 14. —p Mat. ix. 10. Mark ii. 15.—q ch. xv. 1.—r Mat. ix. 13. 1 Tim. i. 15.

See § XXXI.

Matthew IX. 1—13.

§ CLXIX.

CHAP. V. 33—39.

Christ foretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the apostles after his ascension ; and likeneth fainthearted and weak disciples to old bottles and worn garments.

33 ¶ And they said unto him, ° Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees ; but thine eat and drink ?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them ?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36 ¶ And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

¶ Mat. ix. 14. Mark ii. 18.—¶ Mat. ix. 16, 17.—Mark ii. 21, 22.

See § XXXII.

Matthew IX. 14—17.

§ CLXX.

CHAP. VI. 1—12.

Christ reproveth the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the sabbath, by scripture, reason, and miracle.

AND "it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that

' which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, ' what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; ' which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

6 ' And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy *it*?

10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the

man, Stretch forth thy hand, And he did so : and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with madness ; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

12 ^f And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

^g Mat. xli. 1. Mark ii. 23.—^h Ex. xx. 10.—ⁱ Sam. xvi. 6.—^d Lev. xxiv. 9.—^e Mat. xii. 9. Mark iii. 1. See ch. xiii. 14; & xiv. 3. John ix. 16.—^f Mat. xiv. 23.

See § XL.

Matthew XII. 1—13.

§ CLXXI.

CHAP. VI. 13—19.

Christ chooseth twelve Apostles ; heal- eth the diseased.

13 ¶ And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples : ^a and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles ;

14 Simon (^b whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew.

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas *'the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the

3 r

plain, and the company of his disciples, ^a and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases ;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits : and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude ^b sought to touch him : for ^c there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.

^g Mat. x. 1.—^h John i. 42.—ⁱ Jude 1.—^k Mat. iv. 23. Mark iii. 7.—^l Mat. xiv. 26.—^m Mark v. 30. ch. viii. 46.

See § XXXIV.

Matthew X. 1—4.

and § XIII.

Matthew IV. 23—25.

§ CLXXII.

CHAP VI. 20—26.

Christ preacheth to his disciples before the people of blessings and curses.

20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, ^a Blessed *be ye* poor : for your's is the kingdom of God.

21 ^b Blessed *are ye* that hunger now ; for ye shall be filled. ^c Blessed *are ye* that weep now : for ye shall laugh.

22 ^d Blessed *are ye*, when men shall hate you, and when they ^e shall separate you *from*

513

their company, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23 'Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for 'in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 "But woe unto you 'that are rich! for 'ye have received your consolation.

25 'Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. 'Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 'Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

o Mat. v. 8; & xi. 5. Jam. ii. 5.—o Is. lv. 1; & lxx. 13. Mat. v. 6.—p Is. lxi. 3. Mat. v. 4.—q Mat. v. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 19; & iii. 14; & iv. 14.—r John xvi. 2.—s Mat. v. 12. Acts v. 41. Col. i. 24. Jam. i. 2.—t Acts vii. 51.—u Amos vi. 1. Eccles. xxxi. 8. Jam. v. 1.—v ch. xii. 21.—w Mat. vi. 2. v. 16. ch. xvi. 25.—x Is. lxx. 13.—y Prov. xiv. 13.—z John xv. 19. 1 John iv. 5.

See § XIV.

Matthew V. 1—12.

§ CLXXIII.

CHAP VI. 27—36.

How we must love our enemies.

27 ¶ 'But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse

you, and 'pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 'And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; 'and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also.

30 'Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again.

31 'And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 'For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And 'if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But 'love ye your enemies, and do good, and 'lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and 'ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil.

36 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

c Ex. xxiii. 4. Prov. xxv. 2. Mat. v. 44. ver. 35. Rom. xii. 20.—d ch xxiii. 34. Acta vii. 60.—e Mat. v. 39.—f 1 Cor. vi. 7.—g Deut. xv. 7, 8, 10. Prov. xxi. 26. Mat. v. 43.—h Tob. iv. 15. Mat. vii. 12.—i Mat. v. 46.—k Mat. v. 43.—l ver. 27.—m Ps. xxxvii. 28. ver. 30.—n Mat. v. 45.—o Mat. v. 48.

See § XVII.

Matthew V. 38—48.

§ CLXXIV.

CHAP. VI. 37—42.

Christ reproveth rash judgment.

37 ^p Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38 ^r Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into ^s your bosom. For ^t with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them, ^u Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 ^v The disciple is not above his master: but every one ^w that is perfect shall be as his master.

41 ^x And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou

say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, ^y cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

p Mat. vii. 1.—q Prov. xix. 17.—r Ps. lxxix. 12.—s Mat. vii. 2. Mark iv. 24. Jam. ii. 13.—t Mat. xv. 14.—u Mat. x. 24. John xiii. 16; & xv. 20.—v Or, shall be perfected as his master.—w Mat. vii. 8.—x See Prov. xviii. 17.

See § XXIII.

Matthew VII. 1—5.

§ CLXXV.

CHAP. VI. 43—49.

We must join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the word; lest in the evil day of temptation we fall like an house built upon the face of the earth without any foundation.

43 ^a For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For ^b every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they ^c grapes.

45 ^d A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good;

and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil : for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 ¶ And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ?

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like :

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock : and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it : for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth ; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell ; and the ruin of that house was great.

a Mat. vii. 16, 17.—c Mat. xii. 33.—† Gr. a grape.—b Mat. xii. 35.—c Mat. xii. 34.—d Mal. i. 6. Mat. vii. 21 ; & xiv. 11. ch. xiii. 25.—e Mat. vii. 24.

See § § XXVI. XXVII.

Matthew VII. 15—29.

§ CLXXVI.

CHAP. VII. 1—10.

Christ findeth a greater faith in the centurion a Gentile, than in any of the Jews ; healeth his servant being absent.

Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this :

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof :

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee : but say in a word, and

my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto ^t one Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

a Mat. viii. 5.—† Or. *this man*.

See § XXVIII.

Matthew VIII. 5—13.

§ CLXXVII.

CHAP. VII. 11—17.

Christ raiseth from death the widow's son at Nain.

11 ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother,

and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her,

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the ^t bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, ^b Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16 ^c And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, ^d That a great prophet is risen up among us; and ^e that God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

† Or. *coffin*.—^b ch. viii. 54. John xi. 45. Acts ix. 40. Rom. iv. 17.—^c ch. i. 63.—^d ch. xxiv. 19. John iv. 19; & vi. 14; & ix. 17.—^e ch. i. 64.

READER. *And it came to pass the day after that he went into a city called Nain, &c.*—The little city of Nain stood under the hill of Hermon, near unto Tabor; but now it is watered with better dews from above,—the doctrine and miracles of a Saviour.

Not for state, but for the more evidence of the work, is our Saviour attended with a large train, so entering into the gate of that walled city, as if he meant to besiege their faith by his power, and to take it. His providence hath so contrived his journey, that

he meets with the sad pomp of a funeral. A woeful widow, attended with her weeping neighbours, is following her only son to the grave. There was nothing in this spectacle that did not command compassion: a young man in the flower and the strength of his age, swallowed up by death. Our decrepid age both expects death and solicits it; but vigorous youth looks strangely upon that grim serjeant of God. Those mel- low apples that fall alone from the tree we gather up with contentment: we chide to have the unripe unseasonably beaten down with cudgels.

But more, a young man, the only son, the only child, of his mother. No condition can make it more than grievous for a well-natured mother to part with her own bowels, yet surely there is some mitigation of loss. Amongst many children, one may be more easily missed, for still we hope the surviving may supply the comforts of the dead; but when all our hopes and joys must either live or die in one, the loss of that one admits of no consolation. When God would describe the most passionate expression of sorrow that can fall unto the miserable, he can but say, "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in the ashes, make lamentation and bitter mourning as for thine only son." Such was the loss which was the sorrow of this disconsolate mother: neither tears nor words can suffice to discover it.

Yet more: had she been guided by the counsel and supportation of a loving yoke-fellow this burden might have seemed less intolerable. A good husband may make amends for the loss of a son; had the root been left to her entire, she might better have spared the branch: now both are cut up; all the stay of her life is gone, and she seems abandoned to a perfect misery. And now, when she gave up herself for a forlorn mourner, past all capacity of redress, the God of mercy meets her, pities her, relieves her. Here was no solicitor but his own compassion. In other occasions he was sought and sued to. The centurion comes to him for a servant, the ruler for a son, Jairus for a daughter, the neighbours for a paralytic; here he seeks up the patient, and offers the cure unrequested. While we have to do with the will of the Father of mercies, our afflictions are the most powerful suitors. No tears, no prayers, can move Him so much as his own commiseration. O God, none of our secret sorrows can be either hid from thy eyes, or kept from thine heart, and when we are past all our hopes, or possibilities of help, then art thou nearest to us for deliverance.

Here was a conspiracy of all parts to mercy; the heart had compassion; the mouth said "Weep not;" the feet went to the bier; the hand touched the coffin; the power of the deity raised the dead. What the heart felt was secret to itself, the tongue therefore expresses it in words of comfort, "Weep not."

Alas, what are words to strong and just passions? To bid her not to weep, that had lost her only son, was to persuade her to be miserable, and not feel it; to feel and not regard it; to regard and yet to smother it. Concealment doth not remedy, but aggravate sorrow. That with the counsel of not weeping therefore she might see cause of not weeping, his hand seconds his tongue. He arrests the coffin and frees the prisoner, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." The Lord of life and death speaks with command. No finite power could have said so without presumption, or with success. That is the voice that shall one day call up our vanished bodies from those elements into which they are resolved, and raise them out of their dust; neither sea, nor death, nor hell, can offer to detain their dead, when he charges them to be delivered. Incredulous nature! what, dost thou shrink at the possibility of a resurrection, when the God of nature undertakes it! It is no more hard for that Almighty word, which gave being unto all things, to say "let them be repaired" than "let them be made."

I do not see our Saviour stretching upon the dead corpse, as Elias and Elisha upon the son of the Shunamite and Sareptan; nor kneeling down and praying by the bier as Peter did to Dorcas. But I hear him speaking to the dead as if he were alive; and so speaking to the dead, that by the word he makes him alive; "I say unto thee arise."

Death hath no power to make that man be still, whom the Son of God bids arise: immediately he that was dead sat up. So, at the sound of the last trumpet, by the power of the same voice, we shall arise out of the dust and stand up glorious. This mortal shall put on immortality, this corruptible incorruption. This body shall not be buried but sown, and at our day shall therefore spring up with a plentiful increase of glory. How comfortless, how desperate, should be our lying down, if it were not for this assurance of rising. And now, behold, lest our faith should stagger at the assent to so great a difficulty, he hath already, by what he hath done, given us tastes of what he will do. The power that can raise one man can raise a thousand, a million, a world; no power can raise one man but that which is infinite, and that which is infinite admits of no limitation. Under the Old Testament God raised one by Elias, another by Elisha living, a third by Elisha dead: by the hand of the Mediator of the New Testament he raised here the son of the widow, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus; and in attendance of his own resurrection, he made a good delivery of holy prisoners at Jerusalem. He raises the daughter of Jairus from her bed, the widow's son from his coffin, Lazarus from his grave, the dead saints of Jerusalem from their rottenness; that it might appear no degree of death can hinder the efficacy of his overruling command.

He that keeps the keys of death can not only make way for himself through the common hall and outer room, but through the inwardest and most reserved closets of darkness.

Methinks I see this young man, who was thus miraculously awaked from his deathly sleep, wiping and rubbing those eyes that had been shut up in death, and descending from the bier, wrapping his winding sheet about his loins, cast himself down in a passionate thankfulness at the feet of his Almighty Restorer, adoring that divine power which had commanded his soul back again to her forsaken lodging! And though I hear not what he said, yet I dare say they were words of praise and wonder which his returned soul first uttered. It was the mother whom our Saviour first pitied in this act, not the son, who now forced from his great rest, must twice pass through the gates of death. As for her sake therefore he was raised, so to her hand was he delivered, that she might acknowledge that soul given to her, not to the possessor. Who cannot feel the amazement and ecstasy of joy that was in this revived mother when her son now salutes her from out of another world, and both receives and gives congratulations of his renewed life! How suddenly were all the tears of that mournful train dried up with a joyful astonishment! How soon is that funeral banquet turned into a new birthday feast! What striving was here to salute the late carcass of their returning neighbour!

What awful and admiring looks were cast upon the Lord of life, who, seeming homely, was approved omnipotent! How gladly did every tongue celebrate both the work and the author! "A great prophet is raised up amongst us and God hath visited his people." A prophet was the highest name they could find for him whom they saw like themselves in shape, above themselves in power. They were not yet acquainted with God manifested in the flesh. This miracle might well have assured them of more than a prophet, but he that raised the dead man from the bier would not suddenly raise these dead hearts from the grave of infidelity. They shall see reason enough to know that the prophet who was raised up to them was the God that now visited them, and at last should do as much for them as he had done for the young man, raise them from death to life, from dust to glory.

—HALL.

HYMN.

Thee we adore, eternal name,
And humbly own to Thee
How feeble is our mortal frame,
What dying worms are we.

The year rolls round, and steals away
The breath that first it gave;
Whate'er we do, where'er we be,
We're trav'ling to the grave.

Dangers stand thick through all the ground,
To push us to the tomb;
And fierce diseases wait around,
To hurry mortals home.

Infinite joy, or endless woe,
Attends on ev'ry breath;
And yet how unconcern'd we go
Upon the brink of death!

Teach us, O blessed Lord! to run
In faith, life's dang'rous road;
And through the grace of Christ thy Son
To rise to Thee our God.

WATTS.

§ CLXXVIII.

CHAP. VII. 18—28.

*Christ answereth John's messengers
with the declaration of his miracles; and
testifieth to the people what opinion he
held of John,*

18 ^f And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19 ¶ And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in the same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight.

22 ^r Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; ^a how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,

3 v

the deaf hear, the dead are raised, 'to the poor the gospel is preached.

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

24 ¶ ^a And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

^f Mat. xi. 2.—^g Mat. xi. 5.—^h Is. xxxv. 5.—ⁱ Job. iv. 18.
—^k Mat. xi. 7.—^l Mal. iii. 1.

See § XXXVII.

Matthew XI. 1—15.

§ CLXXIX.

CHAP. VII. 29—35.

Christ inveigheth against the Jews, who with neither the manners of John nor of Jesus could be won.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, ^{as} being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers 'rejected' the counsel of God 'against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, 'Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33 For 'John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 'But wisdom is justified of all her children.

as Mat. iii. 5. ch. iii. 12.—¶ Or, frustrated.—a Acts xx. 27.—¶ Or, within themselves.—o Mat. xi. 16.—¶ Mat. iii. 4. Mark i. 6. ch. i. 16.—q Mat. xi. 19.

See § XXXVIII.

Matthew XI. 16—19.

§ CLXXX.

CHAP. VII. 36—50.

Christ sheweth by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how he is a friend to sinners, not to maintain them in sins, but to forgive them their sins upon their faith and repentance.

36 ¶ 'And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, 'This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who

and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred 'pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 'My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 'Wherefore I say unto

thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, 'Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, 'Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

† Mat. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 8. John xi. 2.—s ch. xv. 2.—|| See Mat. xviii. 28.—† Ps. xxiii. 6.—s 1 Tim. i. 14.—† Mat. ix. 2. Mark ii. 5.—† Mat. ix. 8. Mark ii. 7.—s Mat. ix. 22. Mark v. 34; & x. 52. ch. viii. 48; & xviii. 42.

READER. *A woman of the city, which was a sinner* (i.e. who had led an ungodly life,) *when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, &c.* For some reflections on this act and token of love, see the commentary on Matthew xxvi. 13, in § lxxxii., referring to a transaction of the same kind which took place "when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper."

Now hear this woman's case. She was indeed a great sinner; she became a sincere penitent; and one, who, she knows, has power to forgive sin, has pardoned her. This makes her express her concern, her love, and gratitude, after so uncommon a manner. For the language of all these tears and all this humility is plainly this;—My sins were so many and great, that I had been for ever undone, had not God touched my heart with a sense of

the danger I was in. By his grace I see the evil, the folly, and the ingratitude of sinning against so good and gracious a God and Father:—By his Son, who sees the sincerity of my heart and repentance, I am sure that all my past offences are forgiven; and my heart is full of love and gratitude for so mighty a favour, which I cannot but express by all ways which, I hope, will be acceptable to God.—
WILSON.

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors. Upon this parable we may make these following observations:

First. That all mankind are in the condition and circumstances of these two debtors. We have all offended God more or less, and are accountable to his justice.

Secondly. That the best of men have nothing wherewith to satisfy for their offences, or to appease the justice of God:—We have nothing to pay.

Thirdly. Notwithstanding this, God is so gracious and merciful, as to forgive all such as are sensible of their own inability, sorry for the debt they owe, apply to his compassion and forgiveness, and will strive to regain and to deserve his favour. He frankly forgave them both.

Lastly. We have here a rule given us, whereby we may judge of the sincerity of our faith and repentance, and consequently of the certainty that our sins are forgiven. For if we love God, so as to do what will please him, then are we sure our sins will never rise up in judg-

ment against us. Her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much.

I. Let us first consider that we are all in the condition of these two debtors; that is, we have all offended God, and without his favour and goodness we are all undone. Hear what the Holy Scripture teacheth us upon this head—"We are by nature the children of wrath, a generation of evil doers, we love darkness rather than light, and the imagination of our heart is only evil continually," that is, this is the way they naturally bend.

And though we should hope that God may overlook this untowardness of our nature, entailed upon us by the sins of our first parents, yet what a debt do we all owe for the many, very many, actual transgressions of our lives? the effects either of base principles, or a loose education, or evil custom; or from a love of the world, or sensual pleasures, by which God has been dishonoured—his laws despised—his infinite love abused—and his power and justice, as it were, defied.

And though we should any of us escape (as many no doubt have) those sins which lay waste the conscience and are by all acknowledged to be damnable in their nature; yet we are still accountable, the very best of us, for the many opportunities we have lost of doing good, of promoting the glory of God by our good lives and good works. For these two things are certainly true—that God has ordained good works in which we should walk—and that the unpro-

fitable as well as the wicked servant will be cast into outer darkness. So that we are accountable to God, not only for the sins we have committed, but for the duties we have omitted. In short, we are all debtors to God, not only for the pardon of our sins, but also for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

It is by the favour of God, and through the means of grace which he has appointed, that we know our duty—that we are enabled to perform it acceptably, if it is not our own fault;—that when, through our own default, we have broken the laws of God, we are not left without hopes of mercy and pardon, but that God will accept of our repentance, if it is sincere, receive us into favour again, and treat us as if we had never offended him, and what is the most astonishing instance of his goodness, he has given us an assurance of eternal life and happiness after death, if we will but suffer ourselves to be governed by him, during this short life of trial, which is designed to fit us for Heaven. This is the mighty debt we owe.

II. Let us now see what we have, and how we are able to discharge it! Why, truly, as we are in the condition of these debtors with respect to our obligations, so are we with regard to our ability—we have nothing to pay.

This is a circumstance which ought to affect us very sensibly; that God, knowing our inability, and that the very best of men have no merits, nothing of their own, whereby to satisfy for the debt they owe,

does not expect from us what we have not to give—a full satisfaction for the blessings we have received. He knew our poverty, and therefore he himself found out a way to satisfy his own justice and demands.

Let us consider this circumstance of the love of God. We have no way of making him amends. He whom we have provoked to punish us is the first who proposeth a reconciliation. He does not only offer to forgive us upon the most reasonable terms—upon terms which he himself will enable us to perform—but he has given us his most faithful word and promise, that if we will be persuaded and governed by him, he will make us happy beyond our greatest expectations. He sent his only Son into the world to assure us of this; who would never have left the joys of Heaven, nor taken the nature of man, with all its miseries, upon him, had not he known for certain that if men were left to themselves, and to their own wild inventions, they would be most miserable both in this life and the next.

For what strange ways did they, with all their boasted reason, take to satisfy the justice of God, and to appease his anger, whom they had provoked by their sins! They sacrificed the best of their substance—they often sacrificed their very children, to make their consciences easy under the burden of their offences; and yet, after all, their minds were not satisfied.

The merciful God saw and pitied this mournful condition of his helpless creatures, and, knowing their

inability to help themselves, he therefore himself found out a way for their redemption—he sent his only Son [to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification], and he proclaims the terms of pardon, freely forgiving all such as with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, and accept of the terms of their deliverance.

III. The great creditor of the world forgives us frankly. He forgives not only those who have committed the fewest offences, but even those whose sins are great and innumerable; not only those offences which are the effect of our infirmities, but even wilful presumptuous sins, for which, under the law of Moses, there was no atonement. In a word, he is ready to forgive those sins, which, if we are in our right mind, we can never live easy, until we have some reasonable hopes, and even assurance, that they will be forgiven. But can we ever have any such assurance? Yes, most certainly; as much as this happy penitent had, that her sins were forgiven her. And this brings us to the next inference from the text:—

IV. That we have here a rule, a test given us, by which we may be able to judge of the sincerity of our faith and repentance; that is, of our religion, and consequently of our salvation.

For if indeed we love God, that is, if we endeavour to keep his commandments (for that is the only way of expressing our love of God, as he is our Lord and Lawgiver), then may we be well assured, that we believe in him, as we ought to do, and that we

have truly repented of those sins, which, by the grace of God, we resolve never to repeat again. And happy is it for us poor mortals, that the terms of our salvation are so easy to be understood.

Christians might be confounded by the nice disputes concerning faith and repentance; but there is no manner of difficulty in knowing whether we resolve to live up to that measure of knowledge and power which God has given us; and seriously purpose to make use of the means which, in his word, he hath ordained for our salvation. For, though God has freely, upon our repentance, forgiven us what is past; so that, unless it is our own fault, our sins shall never rise up in judgment against us; yet still this mighty favour is vouchsafed on conditions;—on condition, that we become the faithful servants of that God who has been so good to us;—on condition, that whenever, hereafter, we shall be so unhappy as to fall into any sin through ignorance, surprise, or any other temptation, we do immediately return to God, implore his pardon, make new resolutions of obedience, and be more careful to keep them in time to come;—on condition that we forgive others as we hope for forgiveness from God;—on condition that we neglect none of those helps which God has afforded us;—that we hear and read his word—that we renew our vows and covenant with him—that we pray to him daily for what we want, and especially for grace to know and to do our duty—that we will thankfully acknowledge his fa-

vours, and with submission receive what his providence shall order for us. These are the conditions on which we are forgiven; and if we perform these, we may be sure God has forgiven us.

Well, blessed God! if this parable doth truly set forth thy mercy and goodness to sinful men, (as we are sure it does, for they are the words of thy beloved Son,) how then may we all take heart and comfort! It is but confessing our inability, our poverty, our unworthiness, and an earnest desire of being forgiven, and resolving to live like men that have received such mighty favours, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, and the debt is cleared.

And can I write or can you read these words, and not be exceedingly moved with their importance?—can a sinner hear of being frankly forgiven, and his heart not leap with joy? Can the greatest of sinners hear that there is the same mercy even for them, and not be surprized with love and gratitude?

In one word. God would have the love of all his creatures. To gain our love, he has used these methods. He has set before us the evil and the danger of sin. He has offered us a full and free pardon of all our offences, on conditions most reasonable; he has proposed to us very great happiness, and made it our own fault, if we come short of it. After this, he expects that we should love him in some measure proportionable to the blessings we have received and do expect from him. For so, you see, did this worthy penitent

in the history before us; so do all people who are truly sensible of the obligations they lie under; and so shall we too, if we understand, and to be true to our own everlasting interest. We shall shew that we love God, (for love will show itself) by always doing that which he has commanded—that which we believe will please him. We shall always live in the fear of God, that we may not consent to know iniquity. “I have set God always before me, therefore I shall not fall,” saith the Psalmist. If at any time we fall into sin, (for there is no man that sinneth not) we shall remember the practice of the same holy man. “I made haste, and prolonged not the time to keep thy commandments.” We shall be very careful to call upon God by diligent prayer, by which we shall learn to love and depend on him.

His Holy Spirit will direct us in the way we should go, assist us when we want help—awaken us when we grow careless—correct us when we forget our duty—and will never forsake us until he bring us safe to Heaven, when all danger will be over, and we shall be for ever happy.
—WILSON.

HYMN.

No longer far from rest I roam
And search in vain for bliss;
My soul is satisfied at home,
Thy Lord my portion is.

Jesus, who on his glorious throne,
Rules heaven, and earth, and sea,
Is pleas'd to claim me for his own
And give himself to me.

His person fixes all my love.
His blood removes my fear;

ST. LUKE VIII. 1—18.

And, while he pleads for me above,
His arm preserves me here.

His word of promise is my food,
His Spirit is my guide;
Thus daily is my strength renewed,
And all my wants supplied.

For him I count as gain each loss,
Disgrace, for him, renown;
Well may I glory in his cross
While he prepares my crown!

NEWTON.

§ CLXXXI.

CHAP. VIII. 1—18.

Women minister unto Christ of their substance. Christ, after he had preached from place to place, attended with his apostles, propoundeth the parable of the sower, and of the candle.

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

4 ¶ And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every

city, he spake by a parable:

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock are

they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 ¶ * No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 * For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: ' For whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he 'seemeth to have.

Mark iv. 21. ch. xi. 33.—* Mat. x. 26. ch. xlii. 2.—† Mat. xlii. 12; & xxv. 29. ch. xix. 26.—‡ Or, *thinketh that he hath*.

See § XLIV.

Matthew XIII. 1—23.

§ CLXXXII.

CHAP. VIII. 19—39.

Christ declareth who are his mother and his brethren; rebuketh the winds; casteth the legion of devils out of the man into the herd of swine; is rejected of the Gadarenes.

19 ¶ * Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20 And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 ¶ ' Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake;

* Mat. xxvii. 55, 56.—† Mark xvi. 5.—‡ Mat. xlii. 2. Mark iv. 1.—§ Mat. xlii. 10. Mark iv. 10.—¶ Is. vi. 9. Mark iv. 12.—‡ Mat. xlii. 18. Mark iv. 14.—g Mat. v. 15.

ST. LUKE VIII.

And, while he pleads for me above,
His arm preserves me here.

His word of promise is my food,
His Spirit is my guide;
Thus daily is my strength renewed,
And all my wants supplied.

For him I count as gain each loss,
Disgrace, for him, renown;
Well may I glory in his cross,
While he prepares my crown.

the wil' ask

he, could

go out "into
And there was the
herd of many swine feeding on
the mountain: and they be-
sought him that he would suffer
them to enter into them. And
he suffered them.

§ C
CHA
command-
winds and water,

Women obey him.
substance of ¶ And they arrived at
from the country of the Gadarenes,
apostolic which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth
to land, there met him out of
the city a certain man, which
had devils long time, and ware
no clothes, neither abode in any
house but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he
cried out, and fell down before
him, and with a loud voice
said, What have I to do with
thee, Jesus thou Son of God
most high? I beseech thee, tor-
ment me not.

29 (For he had commanded
the unclean spirit to come out
of the man. For oftentimes it
had caught him: and he was
kept bound with chains and in
fetters; and he brake the
bands, and was driven of

33 Then went the devils out
of the man, and entered into
the swine: and the herd ran
violently down a steep place
into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed them
saw what was done, they fled,
and went and told it in the city
and in the country.

35 Then they went out to
see what was done; and came
to Jesus, and found the man,
out of whom the devils were
departed, sitting at the feet of
Jesus, clothed, and in his right
mind; and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw it
told them by what means he
that was possessed of the devils
was healed.

37 ¶ Then the whole mul-
titude of the country of the
Gadarenes round about be-
sought him to depart from

were
he

pa
night
sent him

to thine own
and shew how great
things God hath done unto
thee. And he went his way,
and published throughout the
whole city how great things
Jesus had done unto him.

Mat. xii. 46. Mark iii. 31.—Mat. viii. 23. Mark iv.
35.—Mat. viii. 23. Mark v. 1.—Rev. xx. 3.—Mat.
viii. 34.—Acts xvi. 30.—Mark v. 18.

See § XLIII.
Matthew XII. 46—50.
and § XXX.
Matthew VIII. 23—34.

§ CLXXXIII.

CHAP. VIII. 40—56.

*Christ healeth the woman of the bloody
issue, and raiseth from death Jairus'
daughter.*

40 And it came to pass, that,
when Jesus was returned, the
people *gladly* received him: for
they were all waiting for him.

41 ¶ And, behold, there
came a man named Jairus, and
he was a ruler of the syna-

buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five
thousand men. And he said to
his disciples, Make them sit
down, about fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and
all sat down.

16 And he took the five
loaves, and two fishes, and

43 And when he blessed
an issue of blood, and gave to
which had spent her strength
before the
upon physicians, neither
be healed of any,

44 Came behind him, and
touched the border of his gar-
ment: and immediately her
issue of blood stanchèd.

45 And Jesus said, Who
touched me? When all denied,
Peter and they that were with
him said, Master, the multitude
throng thee and press thee,
and sayest thou, Who touched
me?

46 And Jesus said, Some-
body hath touched me: for I
perceive that 'virtue is gone
out of me.

47 And when the woman
saw that she was not hid, she
came trembling, and falling
down before him, she declared
unto him before all the people
for what cause she had touched
him, and how she was healed
immediately.

48 And he said unto her,

Daughter, be of good comfort : thy faith hath made thee whole ; go in peace.

49 ¶ While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead ; trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him saying, Fear not : believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her : but he said, Weep not ; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway : and he commanded to give her meat.

56 And her parents were astonished : but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

See § XXXII.

Matthew IX. 18—26.

§ CLXXXIV.

CHAP. IX. 1—17.

Christ sendeth his apostles to work miracles and to preach. Herod desired to see Christ.

THEN he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money ; neither have two coats apiece

4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

7 ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him : and he was per-

r Mat. ix. 18. Mark v. 22.—s Mat. ix. 30.—t Mark v. 20. ch. vi. 19.—u Mark v. 35.—v John xi. 11, 13.—y ch. vii. 14. John xi. 43.—z Mat. viii. 4; & ix. 30. Mark v. 43.

plexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead ;

8 And of some, that Elias had appeared ; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded : but who is this, of whom I hear such things ? ' And he desired to see him.

10 ¶ * And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. ' And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him : and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 " And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge and get victuals : for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes ; except we should go and

buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled : and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

e Mat. x. 1. Mark iii. 18; & vi. 7.—d Mat. x. 7, 8. Mark vi. 12. ch. x. 1, 9.—c Mat. x. 9. Mark vi. 8. ch. x. 4; xxii. 8.—f Mat. x. 11. Mark vi. 10.—g Mat. x. 14.—h Acts xiii. 51.—i Mark vi. 12.—k Mat. xiv. 1. Mark vi. 14.—l ch. xxiii. 8.—m Mark vi. 30.—n Mat. xiv. 13.—o Mat. xiv. 15. Mark vi. 25. John vi. 1, 5.

See § XXXIV.

Matthew X. 1—15.

And § § XLVII. XLVIII.

Matthew XIV. 1—21.

§ CLXXXV.

CHAP. IX. 18—27.

Christ enquireth what opinion the world had of him ; foretelleth his passion ; proposeth to all the pattern of his patience.

18 ¶ * And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him : and

he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am ?

19 They answering said, ' John the Baptist ; but some say, Elias ; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am ? ' Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21 ' And he straightly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing ;

22 Saying, ' The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 ¶ ' And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it : but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 ' For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away ?

26 * For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his

Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 , But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

n Mat. xvi. 18. Mark viii. 27.—o Mat. xiv. 2. ver. 7. 8.—p Mat. xvi. 16. John vi. 69.—q Mat. xvi. 26.—r Mat. xvi. 21 ; & xvii. 22.—s Mat. x. 38 ; & xvi. 24. Mark vii. 24. ch. xiv. 27.—t Mat. xvi. 28. Mark viii. 26.—u Mat. i. 53. Mark viii. 28. 2 Tim. ii. 12.—v Mat. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1.

READER. *He asked them saying, Whom say the people that I am?* See the Commentary on Matthew XVI. 18—16. in § LIV.

The Son of Man must suffer many things, &c. See the Commentary on Matthew XVI. 21. in § LV.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me.—We see what it is which our Saviour commands us when he enjoins us to deny ourselves, and take up our cross ; even that we do not gratify ourselves in any thing that is ungrateful to him, nor grudge to take up any cross, or suffer any trouble we meet with in the world for his sake, thinking nothing too dear to forsake, nor anything too heavy to bear for him who thought not his own life too dear, nor the cross itself too heavy to bear for us. What now remains, but that knowing our Saviour's pleasure we should all resolve to do it ? There is none of us but hope and desire to be saved by him ; but that we can never be, unless we observe what he hath prescribed in order to our salvation ; and amongst other things, we see how he hath commanded us to deny ourselves and to take up our cross.

And let us not think that we shall

deny ourselves any real pleasure or profit by renouncing our sins; for what pleasure can we have in displeasing God; or profit to our own souls? No, we shall gratify ourselves, more than we can imagine, by denying ourselves, as much as we are able, whatsoever is offensive or displeasing unto God; for we may be sure, he that came into the world on purpose to save us from evil, commands us nothing but for our own good; neither would he ever have obliged us to deny ourselves, if we could have been saved without it; and as for the cross, that he was so well acquainted with, that he would never have imposed it upon us to take it up, but that it is indispensably necessary for us. And therefore if we be what we pretend, real and true Christians, let us manifest it to the world, and to our own consciences, by denying ourselves whatsoever Christ hath denied us, and by observing whatsoever he hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any cross that he for his own sake shall suffer to be laid upon us; still remembering, that self-denial, though it be unpleasant, is a most necessary duty; and the cross, though it be never so heavy, is but short, and hath nothing less than a crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal crown, which all those shall most certainly obtain, who deny themselves.

It is a hard case if we cannot deny ourselves for him who so far denied himself for us, as to lay down his own life to redeem ours. He who was equal to God himself, yea,

who himself was the true God, so far denied himself as to become a man, yea, "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," for us: and cannot we deny ourselves so much as a fancy, a conceit, a sin, or lust for him? How then can we expect that he should own us for his friends, his servants, or his disciples? No, he will never do it, neither can we in reason expect that he should give himself and all the merits of his death and passion unto us, so long as we think much to give ourselves unto him, or to deny ourselves for him. And therefore, if we desire to be made partakers of those glorious things which he hath purchased with his own precious blood for the sons of men, let us begin here,—indulge our flesh no longer, but deny ourselves whatsoever God hath been pleased to forbid. And for that end, let us endeavour every day more and more to live above the temper of our bodies, and above the allurements of the world, live as those who believe and profess that they are none of their own, but Christ's; his by creation, it was he that made us; his by preservation, it is he that maintains us; and his by redemption, it is he that hath purchased and redeemed us with his own blood. And therefore let us deny ourselves for the future to our very selves, whose we are not, and devote ourselves to him whose alone we are: by this we shall manifest ourselves to be Christ's disciples indeed: especially if we do not only deny ourselves, but also take up our cross and follow him; which brings

me to the second thing which our blessed Saviour here requires of those who would go after him, "even to take up their cross." By the cross, we are to understand whatsoever troubles and calamities, inward or outward, we meet with in the performance of our duty to God or man, which they that would go after Christ must take up as they go along, without any more ado, neither repining at them, nor sinking under them; for we must not think that Christ invites us to an earthly paradise of idleness or outward pleasure, as if we had nothing to do or to suffer for him; for, even as men, we cannot but find many crosses in the world, but as Christians we must expect more; for Christ himself hath told us "that in the world we shall have tribulation." John xvi. 33.

As he hath borne the cross before us, he expects that we now bear it after him; yea, we must not only bear it, but take it up too, not that we should run ourselves into danger, but that we should baulk no duty to avoid it, so as to be willing and ready to undergo the greatest sufferings rather than to commit the least sin, and to run the greatest danger, rather than neglect the smallest duty. If, whilst we are walking in the narrow path of holiness, there happens to be a cross in the way, we must not go on one side nor on the other side of it out of the path we walk in, neither must we kick and spurn it, but we must patiently take it up, and carry it along with us; if it be a little heavy at first, it

will soon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further, our progress towards heaven.

But here we must have a great care to understand our Saviour's meaning, and so our own duty aright. We must not think that every trouble we meet with in the world is the cross of Christ; for we may suffer from our fancy, or humour, or perhaps for our sin and transgression of the laws of God or men; and if so, it is our own cross, not Christ's, which we take upon us; we may thank ourselves for it; I am sure Christ hath no cause to thank us: "For this is thankworthy," saith the apostle, "if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20. And therefore the duty which our Saviour here imposeth on us, in few terms is this, that we be ready not only to do, but to suffer what we can, for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the gospel, and that we omit no duty, nor commit any sin, for fear of suffering, nor think so much of any trouble that befalls us for Christ's sake, but rather to rejoice at it, even as the apostles rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Acts v. 41.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

And do we hope to be with him
Who on the cross resign'd his breath?
Who died a victim to redeem
His people from eternal death?

Allied to him who bore the cross
And call'd the people of the Lord,
The world to us should seem but loss,
And worthless all it can afford.

As pilgrims on their journey home,
'Tis thus his people should be found,
Who seek a city yet to come,
And cannot rest on earthly ground.

'Tis thus his people prove their birth ;
'Tis thus they glorify their Lord ;
To others they resign the earth
And hasten to their bright reward.

KELLY

§ CLXXXVI.

CHAP IX. 28—45.

The Transfiguration : Christ healeth the lunatick : again forewarneth his disciples of his passion.

28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias :

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as

3 Y

they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them : and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, " This is my beloved Son : " hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. " And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son : for he is mine only child.

39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out ; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out ; and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 'Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 'But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

—^a Mat. xvii. 1. Mark ix. 2.—^b Or, *things*.—^c Dan viii. 16; & x. 9.—^d Mat. iii. 17.—^e Acts iii. 22.—^f Mat. xvii. 2.—^g Mat. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14, 17.—^h Mat. xvii. 22.—ⁱ Mark ix. 32. ch. ii. 50; & xviii. 34.

See § § LVI. LVII.

Matthew XVII. 1—23.

§ CLXXXVII.

CHAP. IX. 46—62.

Christ, commendeth humility; biddeth his disciples to shew mildness towards all
538

without desire of revenge. Divers would follow him, but upon conditions.

46 ¶ 'Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, ^a Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: 'for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

49 ¶ ^b And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for 'he that is not against us is for us.

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that ^c he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And ^d they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples

James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as °Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For 'the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

57 ¶ ° And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

59 ' And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, 'I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand

to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

¶ Mat. xviii. 1. Mark ix. 34.—[†] Mat x. 40; & xviii. 5. Mark ix. 37. John xii. 44; & xiii. 20.—[‡] Mat. xviii. 11. 12.—[§] Mark ix. 38. See Num. xi. 26.—^{||} See Mat. xii. 30. ch. xi. 23.—[¶] Mark xvi. 19. Acts i. 2.—[Ⓜ] John iv. 4, 9.—[Ⓝ] 2 Kings i. 10, 12.—[Ⓞ] John iii. 17; & xii. 47.—[Ⓟ] Mat. viii. 19.—[Ⓠ] Mat. viii. 21.—[Ⓡ] See 1 Kings xix. 20.

READER.—*Then there arose a reasoning among them which of them should be greatest.* See Commentary on Matthew XVIII. 1—6. in § LVIII.

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, &c.—The time drew on wherein Jesus must be received up; he must take death in his way; Calvary is in his passage to mount Olivet: he must be lifted up to the cross, thence to climb into his heaven. Yet this comes not into mention, as if all the thoughts of death were swallowed up in this victory over death. Neither, O Saviour, is it otherwise with us, though weak members of thy mystical body: we must die, we shall be glorified. What if death stand before us? We look beyond him, at that transcendent glory. How should we be dismayed with that pain, which is attended with a blessed immortality?

The strongest receipt against death is the happy estate that follows it: next to that, is the fore expectation of it, and resolution against it: "He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." Jerusalem, the nest of his enemies, the amphitheatre of his conflicts, the fatal place of his death. Well did he know the plots and ambushes that were there laid for him, and the bloody issue of those designs:

and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

26 ¶ " And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of

the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out " into the deep.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 ¶ " Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about ' besought him to depart from

them ; for they were taken with great fear : and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now ' the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him : but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

† Mat. xii. 46. † Mark iii. 31.—† Mat. viii. 28. Mark iv. 35.—^m Mat. viii. 28. Mark v. 1.—ⁿ Rev. xx. 3.—^o Mat. viii. 34.—^p Acts xvi. 30.—^q Mark v. 18.

See § XLIII.

Matthew XII. 46—50.

and § XXX.

Matthew VIII. 23—34.

§ CLXXXIII.

CHAP. VIII. 40—56.

Christ healeth the woman of the bloody issue, and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him : for they were all waiting for him.

41 ¶ ' And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the syna-

gogue : and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house :

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 ¶ ' And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment : and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me ? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me ?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me : for I perceive that ' virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her,

and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

26 ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of

the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out *into the deep*.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 ¶ Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about *'* besought him to depart from

§ CLXXXVIII.

CHAP. X. 1—16.

Christ sendeth out at once seventy disciples to work miracles and to preach.

AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and ^asent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, ^bThe harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: ^cpray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: ^dbehold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 ^eCarry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and ^fsalute no man by the way.

5 ^gAnd into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 ^hAnd in the same house remain, ⁱeating and drinking such things as they give; for ^jthe labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 ^kAnd heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, ^lThe kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 ^mEven the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, that ⁿit shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13 ^oWoe unto thee, Chozazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! ^pfor if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 ^qAnd thou, Capernaum, which art ^rexalted to heaven, ^sshalt be thrust down to hell.

16 ^tHe that heareth you heareth me; and ^uhe that

despiseth you despiseth me ;
' and he that despiseth me,
despiseth him that sent me.

o Mat. x. 1. Mark vi. 7.—d Mat. ix. 37, 38. John iv. 35.—c 2 Thess. iii. 1.—d Mat. x. 16.—e Mat. x. 9, 10. Mark vi. 8. ch. ix. 8.—f 2 Kings iv. 20.—g Mat. x. 12.—h Mat. x. 11. i 1 Cor. x. 27.—k Mat. x. 10. 1 Cor. ix. 4. & c. 1 Tim. v. 18.—l ch. ix. 2.—m Mat. iii. 2; & iv. 17 & x. 7. ver. 11.—n Mat. x. 14. ch. ix. 5. Acts xiii. 51; & xviii. 6.—o Mat. x. 15. Mark vi. 11.—p Mat. xi. 21.—q Esak. iii. 6.—r Mat. xi. 28.—s See Gen. xi. 4. Deut. i. 28. Is. xiv. 13. Jer. ii. 55.—t See Esak. xxvi. 20; & xxvii. 18.—u Mat. x. 40. Mark ix. 37. John xiii. 20.—v 1 Thess. iv. 8.—y John v. 23.

§ CLXXXIX.

CHAP. X. 17—37.

Christ admonishes his disciples to be humble, and wherein to rejoice; thanketh his Father for his grace; magnifieth the happy estate of his Church; teacheth the Lawyer how to attain eternal life; and to take every one for his neighbour that needeth his mercy.

17 And ' the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, ' I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, ' I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because ' your names are written in heaven.

544

21 ¶ " In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 " All things are delivered to me of my Father: and ' no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him

23 ¶ And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, ' Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, ' that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

25 ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, ' Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and 'thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and " thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to "justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, ' he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain ' Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,

34 And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the

host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

s verse 1.—s John xii. 31; & xvi. 11. Rev. ix. 1; & xii. 8, 9.—b Mark xvi. 18. Acts xviii. 5.—c Ex. xxxii. 32. Psalm lxi. 28. Isaiah iv. 3. Dan. xii. 1. Phil. iv. 8. Heb. xii. 23. Rev. xiii. 8; & xx. 12; & xxi. 27.—d Mat. xi. 28.—e Mat. xxviii. 18. John iii. 35; & v. 27; & xvii. 2.—f Many ancient copies add these words, *And turning to his disciples, he said,—f* John i. 18; & vi. 44, 46.—g Mat. xiii. 16.—h 1 Pet. i. 10.—i Mat. xix. 16; & xxii. 36.—k Dent. vi. 5.—l Lev. xix. 18. m Lev. xviii. 6. Neh. ix. 29. Ezek. xx. 11, 13, 21. Rom. x. 5.—n ch. xvi. 15.—o Ps. xxxviii. 11.—p John iv. 9.—q See Mat. xx. 2.

READER. *And the seventy returned again with joy, &c.*—The seventy disciples returned to Jesus, perhaps about the feast of Tabernacles, with an account of their ministry. They appeared to be elated by having succeeded beyond their expectation: and expressed their grateful surprize, because the very devils were subject to them through his name, as if nothing from that time should be able to stand against them. Jesus himself also triumphed in the downfall of Satan, not only as approving the punishment inflicted on him for his original apostasy, but as foreseeing the ruin of his interest and kingdom in the world to be approaching. He promised, therefore, to confirm to his disciples the miraculous powers which they had exercised, and to support them against every snare and danger. But, lest they should be "exalted

above measure" through their distinguished privileges, he reminded them that these were of comparatively little worth; and that it was a far greater cause of thankfulness and joy to be admitted into the family of God, and enrolled among the heirs of heaven, than to possess the most absolute dominion over the infernal spirits.—ROBINSON.

I thank thee, O Father, &c. See Matthew xi. 25—27, in § XXXIX.

Blessed are the eyes, &c. See Matthew xiii. 16—18, in § XLIV.

Thou shalt love, &c. See Matthew xxii. 37—40, in § LXXII.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. Should man go about to serve and keep the law of God divided into two tables, and so purchase to himself eternal life? Indeed, if Adam and his posterity had been able to satisfy and fulfil the law perfectly, in loving God above all things, and their neighbour as themselves, then should they have easily quenched the Lord's wrath, and escaped the terrible sentence of eternal death pronounced against them by the mouth of Almighty God. For it is written, Do this and thou shalt live; that is to say, fulfil my commandments, keep thyself upright and perfect in them according to my will; then shalt thou live and not die. Here is eternal life promised with this condition, that they keep and observe the law! But such was the frailty of mankind after his fall, such was his weakness and imbecility, that he could not walk uprightly in God's commandments, though he would

never so fain; but daily and hourly fell from his bounden duty, offending the Lord his God divers ways, to the great increase of his condemnation, insomuch that the prophet David crieth out on this wise, "All have gone astray, all are become unprofitable: there is none that doth good, no, not one." (Ps. v.) In this case what profit could he have by the law? None at all. For as St. James saith "He that shall observe the whole law, and yet faileth in one point, is become guilty of all," (James iii.), and in the book of Deuteronomy it is written, "Cursed be he," saith God, "which abideth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." (Deut. xxvii.) Behold, the law bringeth a curse with it, and maketh us guilty, not because it is of itself naught or unholy (God forbid we should so think), but because the frailty of our sinful flesh is such, that we can never fulfil it, according to the perfection that the law requireth.—HOMILY ON THE PASSION.

But he, willing to justify himself, said, And who is my neighbour? What effect was produced upon the scribe? He was neither humbled nor silenced, but, still desirous to stand upon his own defence, and perhaps in order to evade conviction, he proposed another question, Who is my neighbour? From this circumstance our Lord took occasion to confute the erroneous notion, then too prevalent, that neighbours included only particular friends, and such as were situated near to each other, or connected by the bonds of kindred or religion. The sense of the law was confined

ST. LUKE X. 38—42.

within a narrow compass, while it was thought that none but persons of this description have any claim upon our benevolence. Jesus, however, shewed that we are indispensably required to extend our utmost kindness to all our fellow-creatures in distress, of whatever nation or profession, though separated from us, or even incensed against us by party quarrels or distinctions. This he did in the parable of the good Samaritan, an affecting and instructive little history, the circumstances of which are so naturally combined, and related with such simplicity that it cannot fail to interest every reader.

The proper application is pointed out to each of us, as well as to the lawyer: the Saviour says, "Go, and do thou likewise." There cannot be a more delicate or more forcible reproof of a cruel, covetous, and narrow mind; or a more striking representation of the necessity and happy effects of an enlarged charity. How unbounded, how active and generous, should our love be! But do we really appear to possess such a disposition? Where are the fruits? Do we not betray a proud, contracted, unfeeling spirit? Are we not restrained from doing good sometimes by selfishness, sometimes by malevolence? Alas! who can say that he has uniformly looked upon all men as his neighbours, and treated them with the same kindness which he would expect for himself in similar circumstances? How little do we resemble our great pattern, who has exhibited the most extensive and disinterested benevolence!

The Lord Jesus "remembered us in our low estate," and though we were sinners and enemies, he not only stretched out his arm to rescue us from misery, but gave himself a sacrifice, and "died for the ungodly," Rom. v. 6—10. May the contemplation of this love excite us to "love one another, with a pure heart, fervently." 1 Pet. i. 22.—ROBINSON.

HYMN.

Father of mercies, send thy grace,
 All powerful from above,
 To form in our obedient souls,
 The image of thy love.
 O may our sympathizing breasts,
 That generous pleasure know,
 Kindly to share in others' joy,
 And weep for others' woe!
 When the most helpless sons of grief,
 In low distress are laid,
 Soft be our hearts their pains to feel,
 And swift our hands to aid.
 So Jesus looked on dying men,
 When throned above the skies,
 And in the midst of joys divine,
 He felt compassion rise.
 On wings of love the Saviour flew,
 To raise us from the ground,
 And made the riches of his blood
 A balm for every wound.

DODDRIDGE.

§ CXC.

CHAP. X. 38—42.

Christ reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named ^rMartha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, ^rwhich also ^rsat at

Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

g John xi. 1; & xii. 2, 3.—r 1 Cor vii, 32, &c.—s ch. viii. 35; Acts xxii. 3.—t Ps. xxvii. 4.

READER. *Now it came to pass, as they went, &c.* We may read long enough ere we find Christ in a house of his own. "The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests:" he that had all possessed nothing. One while I see him in a publican's house, then in a Pharisee's; now I find him at Martha's. His last entertainment was with some neglect, this with too much solicitude.

Our Saviour was now in his way; the sun might as soon stand still as he. The more we move, the liker we are to heaven, and to this God that made it. His progress was to Jerusalem, for some holy feast. He, whose devotion neglected not any of those sacred solemnities, will not neglect the due opportunities of his bodily refreshing: as not thinking it meet to travel and preach harbourless, he diverts (where he knew his welcome) to the village of Bethany.

There dwelt the two devout sisters with their brother, his friend Lazarus; their roof receives him. O happy house, into which the Son of God vouchsafed to set his foot! O blessed women, that had the grace to be the hostesses to the God of heaven! How should I envy your felicity herein, if I did not see the same favour, if I be not wanting to myself, lying open to me! I have two ways to entertain my Saviour; in his members and in himself: in his members, by charity and hospitableness: "What I do to one of these his little ones, I do to him;" in himself, by faith: "if any man open, he will come in and sup with him."

O Saviour, thou standest at the door of our hearts, and knockest by the solicitations of thy messengers, by the sense of thy chastisements, by the motions of thy spirit: if we open to thee by a willing admission and faithful welcome, thou wilt be sure to take up our souls with thy gracious presence, and not to sit with us for a momentary meal, but to dwell with us for ever. Lo! thou didst but call in at Bethany: but here shall be thy rest for everlasting.

Martha, it seems, as being the eldest sister, bore the name of the housekeeper: Mary was her assistant in the charge. A blessed pair! Sisters not more in nature than in grace, in spirit no less than in flesh. How happy a thing is it when all the parties in a family are jointly agreed to entertain Christ.—HALL.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, &c. It could not but trouble

devout Mary to hear her sister's impatient complaint—a complaint of herself to Christ, with such vehemence of passion, as if there had been such strangeness betwixt the two sisters, that the one would do nothing for the other, without an external compulsion from a superior. How can she choose but think, If I have offended, why was I not secretly taxed for it in a sisterly familiarity? What if there had been some little omission? must the whole house ring of it before my Lord, and all his disciples? is this carriage beseeming a sister? is my devotion worthy of a quarrel? Lord, dost thou not care that I am injuriously censured? Yet I hear not a word of reply from that modest mouth. O holy Mary, I admire thy patient silence: thy sister blames thee for thy piety; the disciples afterwards blame thee for thy bounty and cost; not a word falls from thee in a just vindication of thine honour and innocence, but in a humble taciturnity thou leavest thine answer to thy Saviour. How should we learn of thee, when we are complained of for well-doing, to seal up our lips, and to expect our righting from above!

And how sure, how ready art thou, O Saviour, to speak in the cause of the dumb! “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part.”

What needed Mary to speak for herself, when she had such an advocate? Doubtless, Martha was, as it were divided from herself with the multiplicity of her careful thoughts:

our Saviour, therefore, doubles her name in his compellation, that, in such distraction, he may both find and fix her heart. The good woman made full account, that Christ would have sent away her sister with a check, and herself with thanks; but now her hopes fail her; and though she be not directly reprov'd, yet she hears her sister more approv'd than she: “Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things.” Our Saviour received courtesy from her in her diligent and costly entertainment; yet he would not blanch her errors, and smooth her up in her weak misprision. No obligations may so enthral us, as that our tongues should not be free to reprove faults where we find them. They are base and servile spirits that will have their tongue tied to their teeth.

This glance towards a reproof implies an opposition of the condition of the two sisters: themselves were not more in nature, than their present humour and estate differed. One is opposed to many, necessary to superfluous, solicitude to quietness: “Thou art careful and troubled about many things, one thing is necessary.” How far then may our care reach to these earthly things? On the one side, O Saviour, thou hast charg'd us to “take no thought what to eat, drink, put on,” on the other, thy chosen vessel hath told us, that “he that provides not for his family hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” We may, we must, care for many things, so that our care be for good and

well; for good, both in kind and measure; well, so as our care be free from distraction, from distrust; from distraction, that it hinder us not from the necessary duties of our general calling; from distrust, that we misdoubt not God's providence, while we employ our own. We cannot care for thee, unless we thus care for ourselves, for our's.

Alas! how much care do I see everywhere, but how few Marthas! Her care was for our Saviour's entertainment; ours for ourselves. One finds perplexities in his estate, which he desires to extricate; another beats his brain for the raising of his house; one busies his thoughts about the doubtful condition, as he thinks, of the times, and casts in his anxious head the imaginary events of all things, opposing his hopes to his fears: another studies how to avoid the cross blows of an adversary. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Foolish men, why do we set our hearts upon the rack, and need not? Why will we endure to bend under that burden, which more able shoulders have offered to undertake for our case?

Thou hast bidden us, O God, to cast our cares upon thee with promise to care for us. We do gladly unload ourselves upon thee: O let our care be to depend upon thee, as thine is to provide for us.

Whether Martha be pitied or taxed for her sedulity, I am sure Mary is praised for her devotion: "One thing is necessary." Not by way of negation, as if nothing were

necessary but this; but by way of comparison, as that nothing is so necessary as this. Earthly occasions must vail to spiritual. Of those three main grounds of all our actions, necessity, convenience, pleasure, each transcends other: convenience carries it away from pleasure, necessity from convenience, and one degree of necessity from another. The degrees are according to the conditions of the things necessary. The condition of these spiritual necessities is, that without them we cannot live eternally. So much difference, then, as there is betwixt temporary and eternal, so much there must needs be betwixt the necessity of these bodily actions and these spiritual: both are necessary in their kinds; neither must here be an opposition, but a subordination. The body and soul must be friends, not rivals; we may not so ply the Christian, that we neglect the man.

O the vanity of those men; who, neglecting that one thing necessary, affect many things superfluous! Nothing is needless with worldly minds but this one, which is only necessary, the care of their souls. How justly do they lose that they cared not for, while they over care for that which is neither worthy nor possible to be kept!

Neither is Mary's business more allowed than herself: "She hath chosen the good part." It was not forced upon her, but taken up by her election. Martha might have sat still as well as she: she might have stirred about as well as Martha. Mary's will made this choice,

ST. LUKE XI. 1—18.

not without the inclination of him who both gave this will and commends it. That will was before renewed: no marvel if it choose the good; though this were not in a case of good and evil, but of good and better. We have still this holy freedom, through the inoperation of him that hath freed us. Happy are we, if we can improve this liberty to the best advantage of our souls.

The stability or perpetuity of good adds much to the praise of it. Martha's part was soon gone; the thank and use of a little outward hospitality cannot long last: "but Mary's shall not be taken away from her." The act of her hearing was transient, the fruit permanent; she now hears that which will stick by her for ever.

What couldst thou hear, O holy Mary, from those sacred lips, which we hear not still? That heavenly doctrine is never but the same, not more subject to change than the author of it. It is not impossible that the exercise of the gospel should be taken from us; but the benefit and virtue of it is as inseparable from our souls as their being. In the hardest times that shall stick closest to us, and till death, in death, after death, shall make us happy.—
HALL.

HYMN.

Beset with snares on every hand,
In life's uncertain path I stand;
Saviour divine, diffuse thy light,
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.

Engage this roving, treacherous, heart
To fix on Mary's better part:
To scorn the trifles of a day,
For joys that none can take away.

Then, let the wildest storms arise,
Let tempests mingle earth and skies,
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,
But all my treasure with me bear.

If thou, my Saviour, still be nigh,
Cheerful I live, and joyful die;
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in thee.
DODDRIDGE.

§ CXCI.

CHAP. XI. 1—13.

Christ teacheth to pray, and that instantly: assuring that God so will give us good things.

AND it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us 'day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at mid-

ST. LUKE XI. 14—28.

night, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves ;

6 For a friend of mine ' in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him ?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed ; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, ' though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 ° And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 ' If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent ?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he ' offer him a scorpion ?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children : how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

^a Matt. vi. 9.—[Or, for the day.—] Or, out of his way.
552

—^b ch. xviii. 1, &c.—^c Matt. vii. 7 ; & xxi. 22 Mark xi. 24. John xv. 7. James i. 6. 1 John iii. 22.—^d Matt. vii. 9.—† Gr. give.

See § XIX.

Matthew VI. 9—13.

and § XXIV.

Matthew VII. 7—11.

§ CXCII.

CHAP. XI. 14—28.

He, casting out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees : and sheweth who are blessed.

14 ¶ ' And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake ; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, ' He casteth out devils through ' Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting *him*, ' sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 ^ But ' he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation ; and a house *divided* against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand ? because ye say

that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I ^a with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 'When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace :

22 But ^m when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 ⁿ He that is not with me is against me : and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 ^o When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest ; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself ; and they enter in, and dwell there : and ^p the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain

4 A

woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, ^q Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea ^r rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

^a Mat. ix. 32; & xii. 22.—^f Mat. ix. 34; & xii. 24.—^g Gr. *Beelzeboul*, and so ver. 18, 19.—^h Mat. xii. 28; & xvi. 1.—ⁱ Mat. xii. 26. Mark iii. 24.—^j John ii. 23.—^k Ex. viii. 15.—^l Mat. xii. 23. Mark iii. 27.—^m Is. liii. 12. Col. ii. 15.—ⁿ Mat. xii. 30.—^o Mat. xii. 43.—^p John v. 14. Heb. vi. 4; & x. 28. ^q Pet. ii. 20.—^r ch. i. 28—48.—^s Mat. vii. 21. ch. viii. 21. Jam. i. 23.

See § XLII.

Matthew XII. 22—30.

And § XLIII.

Matthew XII. 48—50.

§ CXCIII.

CHAP. XI. 29—36.

Christ preacheth to the people.

29 ¶ ^r And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation : they seek a sign ; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as ^s Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 ^t The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation,

and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for ^r they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

33 ^rNo man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a ^rbushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 ^rThe light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when ^r the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

^r Mat. xii. 28, 29.—^r Jonah i. 17; & ii. 10.—^r 1 Kin. x. 1.—^r Jonah iii. 5.—^r Mat. v. 15. Mark iv. 21. ch. viii. 16.—^r See Mat. v. 15.—^r Mat. vi. 22.—^r Gr. *a candle by its bright shining.*

See § XLIII.

Matthew XII. 28—42.

And Matthew V. 15 in § XV.

Matthew VI. 22, 23 in § XXI.

§ CXCIV.

CHAP XI. 37—54.

Christ reprehendeth the outward shew of holiness in the Pharisees, Scribes, and Lawyers.

37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 And ^r when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 ^r And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but ^r your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 *Ye* fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

41 ^r But rather give alms¹ of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 ^r But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 ^r Woe unto you, Pharisees ! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 ^r Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! ^a for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware of *them*.

45 ¶ Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Woe unto you also, *ye* lawyers ! ^r for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 ^a Woe unto you ! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers : for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, ' I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute :

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world,

may be required of this generation ;

51 ^m From the blood of Abel unto ⁿ the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple ; verily, I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 ^o Woe unto you, lawyers ! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge : ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye ^p hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things :

54 Laying wait for him, and ^r seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

^a Mark vii. 8.—^b Mat. xxiii. 25.—^c Tit. i. 15.—^d Is. lviii. 7. Dan. iv. 27. ch. xii. 33.—^e Or, as you are able.—^f Mat. xxiii. 6. Mark xii. 36, 39.—^g Mat. xxiii. 27.—^h Ps. v. 9.—ⁱ Mat. xxiii. 4.—^j Mat. xxiii. 29.—^k Mat. xxiii. 34.—^l Gen. iv. 8.—^m 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.—ⁿ Mat. xxiii. 18.—^o Or, forbid.—^p Mark xii. 13.

See § § LXXIII. LXXV.

Matthew XXIII. 1—39.

§ CXC.V.

CHAP. XII. 1—12.

Christ preacheth to his disciples to avoid hypocrisy and fearfulness in publishing his doctrine.

IN ^a the mean time, when there

were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, ^a Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2 ^c For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

4 ^e And I say unto you ^f my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two ^g farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 ^h Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man

also confess before the angels of God:

9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

10 And ⁱ whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

11 ^k And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

^a Mat. xvi. 6. Mark viii. 15.—^b Mat. xvi. 12.—^c Mat. x. 26. Mark iv. 22. ch. viii. 17.—^d Mat. x. 26. Is. li. 7, 8, 12, 13. Jer. i. 8.—^e John xv. 14, 15.—^f See Mat. x. 29.—^g Mat. x. 32. Mark viii. 28. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 John ii. 23.—^h Mat. xii. 31, 32. Mark iii. 29. 1 John v. 14.—ⁱ Mat. x. 19. Mark xiii. 11. ch. xxi. 14.

See § § XXXV. XXXVI.

Matthew X. 19—33.

§ CXCVI.

CHAP. XII. 13—34.

Christ warneth the people to beware of covetousness, by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns: we must not be over careful of earthly things, but seek the kingdom of God: we must give alms.

13 ¶ And one of the com-

pany said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, 'Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you ?

15 And he said unto them, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully :

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ?

18 And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night " thy soul shall be required of thee : " then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ?

21 So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, °and is not rich toward God.

22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, ° Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat ; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens : for they neither sow nor reap ; which neither have storehouse nor barn ; and ° God feedeth them : how much more are ye better than the fowls ?

25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit ?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest !

27 Consider the lilies, how they grow : they toil not, they spin not ; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven ; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith ?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, " neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do

the nations of the world seek after : and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 ¶ But rather seek ye the kingdom of God ; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock ; for ' it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 ' Sell that ye have, and give alms ; * provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

† John xviii. 36.—k 1 Tim. vi. 7, &c.—l Eccles. xi. 9. Eccles. xi. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 32. James v. 5.—| Or, do they require thy soul.—m Job xx. 22; & xxvii. 8. Ps. lxxvii. 7. Jam. iv. 14.—n Ps. xxxix. 6. Jer. xvii. 11.—o Mat. vi. 20 ver. 33. 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. James ii. 5.—p Mat. vi. 26.—q Job xxxviii. 41. Ps. cxlvii. 9.—r Or, live not in careful suspense.—s Mat. vi. 33.—t Mat. xi. 25, 26.—u Mat. xix. 21. Acts ii. 45; & iv. 34.—v Mat. vi. 20. ch. xvi. 9. 1 Tim. vi. 19.

READER.—*He said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness ; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*—Are you Christians ? Then let me tell you, you are sons and daughters of the eternal God, the only monarch of the whole world, and so are heirs apparent to the crown of glory. Tell me then, what an unseemly sight would it be to see a prince doting upon a beggar, and robes enamoured with rags ! How much more is it unseemly for you, who have nothing less than heaven entailed upon you, to be doting upon the beggarly vanities of this lower world ! which certainly all true

Christians should look upon as below their concern, carrying themselves as becometh those who expect ere long, to solace themselves in the enjoyment of God himself. While David looked to his father's sheep, he carried himself as a shepherd ; but when he had mounted the throne, majesty presently sat in his brow, and he behaved himself like a king. So you, although whilst you lived in your sins, and so were strangers unto God, you then lived like earthly creatures, conversing with nothing but dust and clay ; yet, now that you profess to have repented, and to believe in Christ, and so to be entitled to the kingdom of heaven, you should live like yourselves, and scorn to stoop so low as to lick up the serpent's food ; deporting yourselves as those who every moment look to be sent for, to go and take possession of your celestial crown. The very thought whereof should make you disdain the highest enjoyments that this world is able to afford you, as things not worthy to be compared with the glory that Christ hath procured for you. So that, let me tell you, so long as your thoughts and affections are taken up with anything upon earth, you act below yourselves. You who expect ere long to bathe yourselves in those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore, can it become you to drown yourselves in a deluge of carnal pleasures and sensual delights ? You that have such a plenty of bread and heavenly manna in your father's house ; is it not below you to feed like the prodigal upon the husks, with

the swine of this world? You that hope ere long to trample upon the moon, and to be advanced above the stars themselves, is it fitting for you to lie under a clod of earth? In a word: you that expect ere long to be invested with all the bliss and happiness that a creature is capable of, is it a comely thing for you, in the mean while, to spend your time in running after shadows, and in playing with childish gewgaws; in raking in the dirt, or treading in the mire? Is this proper work for the heirs of heaven to be employed in? Or is this to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called?" No, surely; and therefore so long as you suffer your affections to be bent upon the things below, you act below yourselves as men, much more as Christians. The things upon earth can never satisfy your desires; for nothing can do that but what is better than yourselves; although you may have too much of them, you can never have enough of them; never so much as to satisfy your souls, and make you happy.

Give me leave to mind you of the Apostle's sayings, that "covetousness is idolatry," Col. iii. 5; and that whosoever minds earthly things is a shame to the gospel, and an enemy to the cross of Christ, Phil. iii. 18—19; and then, of consequence, in setting your affections upon them, you thwart God's intentions in giving of them; who gave them not but that you should improve them for his glory. And, therefore, have a care lest your table become a snare, and your earthly wealth an occasion of your eternal ruin. Have a care lest in catching

at the shadow, you lose the substance, and exchange your future happiness for present misery.—BEVERIDGE.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.—There is a foolish disposition in the hearts of men to think that they shall ever continue in that state which they are once in. The proud and wicked man hath said in his heart, "I shall never be moved, I shall never be in adversity. God hath forgotten; he hideth his face; he will never see it." Psalm x. 6—11. And David was overtaken with this gross error, "I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved." This was the vain conceit of the fool in the gospel. "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Luke xii. 19. This ever hath been the language of secure and wicked men; "None evil can come upon us." Micah iii. 11. "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart," Deut. xxix. 19. "To morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," Isa. lvi. 12. If men would but consider how easily God can break down all their cobwebs, and sweep away their refuge of lies; how easily he can spoil them of all the provisions of their lusts, they would be more fearful of him, and less dote upon things that will not profit; they would take heed how they abuse their youth, strength, time, and abilities, as if they had a spring of them all within themselves, and consider that their good is not in their own hand; that the scythe can get as well through the green grass as the dry stubble; that

consuming fire can as well melt the hardest metal as the softest wax. What is the reason why men in sore extremities make strong resolutions, and vow much repentance and amendment of life, and yet as soon as they are off from the rack, return again to their vomit, and wallow in their wonted lusts, but because their sense made them feel that then, which if they had faith they might still perceive and so still continue in the same good resolutions, namely, that God's hand was near unto them? But what, is not God a God far off as well as near at hand? Jer. xxiii. 23. Doth not he say of wicked men, that in the fulness of their sufficiency they shall be in straits! Cannot he blast the corn in the blade, in the harvest, in the barn, in the very mouth of the wicked? Did he not cut off Belshazzar in his cups, and Herod in his robes, and Babylon and Tyrus in their pride, and Haman in his favour, and Jezebel in her paint? Have but faith enough to say, I am a man, and therefore no human events should be strange unto me; and even that one consideration may keep a man from outrage of sinning. It may be I have abundance of earthly things, yet am I still but a gilded potsherd. It may be I have excellent endowments, but I have them all in an earthen vessel. And shall the potsherd strive with the potter, and provoke him that made it? This would teach us to fear and tremble at God's power. Though we look upon death and judgment as afar off, yet God can make them near when He will; for he hath said, that the damnation of wicked men is swift, and

that they are near unto cursing. His judgments are like lightning, and have wings suddenly to overtake a sinner. He requires but a month, nay, but a morning, nay but a moment, to consume his enemies, and bring desolation upon those who said they should sit as a lady for ever, and did never remember the latter end. "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged," namely, by the patience and permission of God, in whose hands his days are, "yet it shall be well with them that fear God." Eccl. viii. 12—13.—REYNOLDS.

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, &c. See Matthew vi. 19—34, and the Commentary.

HYMN.

O happy soul that lives on high
While men lie groveling here,
Whose hopes are fix'd above the sky,
And faith forbids his fear.

His conscience cleans'd from all his sins,
Love, peace, and joy combine
To form a life whose holy springs
Are hidden and divine.

No earthly wealth, nor joy, nor throne,
Is his ambition here;
Content and pleas'd to live unknown
Till Christ his life appear.

He looks to heaven's eternal hill
To meet that glorious day;
But patient waits his Saviour's will
To fetch his soul away.

WATTS.

§ CXCVII.

CHAP. XII. 35—48.

We must be ready at a knock to open to our Lord whensoever he cometh. Christ's ministers are to see to their charge.

35 'Let your loins be girded about, and 'your lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 'Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the thirl watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 'And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 'Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 ¶ Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, 'Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?

43 Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 'Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 'But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming: and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will 'cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And 'that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

48 'But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given of him

shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

*—Eph. vi. 14. 1 Pet. i. 18.—Mat. xxv. 1. &c.—Mat. xxiv. 46.—Mat. xxiv. 48. 1 The. v. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3; & xvi. 15.—Mat. xxiv. 44; xxv. 18. Mark xiii. 35. ch. xxi. 34, 36. 1 The. v. 6. 2 Peter iii. 12.—Mat. xxiv. 46; & xxv. 21. 1 Cor. ix. 2.—Mat. xxiv. 47.—Mat. xxiv. 48.—Or. *cut above* of Mat. xxiv. 51.—Num. xv. 30. Deut. xxv. 2. John ix. 41; & xv. 22. Acts xvii. 32. James iv. 17.—Law. v. 17. 1 Tim. i. 18.*

See § § LXXVIII. LXXIX.

Matthew XXIV. 34—51.

and XXV. 1—18.

§ CXCVIII.

CHAP XII. 49—59.

Christ's ministers are to look for persecution. The people must take this time of grace, because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.

49 ¶ ^aI am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?

50 But ^bI have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I ^cstraitened till it be accomplished!

51 ^dSuppose ye that I am come to give peace on the earth? I tell you, Nay; ^ebut rather division:

52 ^fFor from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the

562

son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

54 ¶ And he said also to the people, "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

58 ¶ ^gWhen thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, ^has thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last ⁱmite.

*A ver. 51.—Mat. xx. 22. Mark x. 38.—Or. *peeled*.—^aMat. x. 34. ver. 40.—^bMic. vii. 6. John vii. 43; & ix. 16; & x. 19.—^cMat. x. 35.—^dMat. xvi. 3.—^eRev. xvii. 8. Mat. v. 26.—^fSee Ps. xxxiii. 6. Is. lv. 6.—^gSee Mark xii. 42.*

ST. LUKE XIII 1—9.

READER.—*Suppose ye that I am come, &c.* See Matthew X. 34, in § XXXVI.

The father shall be divided against the son, &c. See Matthew X. 21, in § XXXV.

When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, &c. See Matthew XVI. 1—3, in § LIII.

When thou goest with thine adversary, &c. See Matthew V. 25, in § XVI.

§ CXCIX.

CHAP. XIII. 1—9.

Christ preacheth repentance upon the punishment of the Galilæans, and others. The fruitless fig tree may not stand.

THERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 ¶ He spake also this parable; * A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

1 Or, debtors. Mat. xviii. 24. ch. xi. 4—6 Is. v. 3. Mat. xxi. 19.

READER.—*Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans because they suffered such things.*—Though it were an error to think that all temporal evils are intended of God as punishments of some particular guiltiness, and so to be taken as infallibly concluding against either persons or causes as evil; yet certainly the hand of God upon ourselves or others is wisely to be considered, and it will very often be found a punishment pointing to the sin; and it is certainly an argument of very great stiffness and pride of heart, not to observe and acknowledge it, and a sure presage either of

utter ruin, or at least, of a heavier stroke. Any that is set against the Lord, and will not be humbled, whether by what he sees on others, or what he feels on himself, Isa. xxvi. 11, shall find he hath an overmatch to deal with, that will either bow or break him. Tremble before the Lord, and search your own hearts, and let us think, though we may not be guilty of such public scandalous evils, as others fall into, and are punished for, yet how full are we of secret malice, pride and lust, and wonder at the patience of God to ourselves, while multitudes have been swept away round about us. Think you that they who have died by "sword or pestilence" of late "were greater sinners" than we that are behind? Oh no! "but except we repent, we shall all likewise perish." Enough of these arrows are still in God's arsenal; and though he use not these to us, yet remember death, and judgment, and eternity are before us, and they call for wise and speedy consideration and repentance.—LEIGHTON.

I tell you, nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.—Poor hard hearted sinner! dost thou ever consider upon what terms thou standest all this while with him who calleth on thee to turn? Thou art his own, and owest him thyself and all thou hast; and may he not command his own? Thou art his absolute servant, and shouldst serve no other master. Thou standest at his mercy, and thy life is in his hand; and he is resolved to save thee upon no other terms. Thou hast many malicious spiritual enemies, that would be glad if God would

but forsake thee, and let them alone with thee, and leave thee to their will: how quickly would they deal with thee in another manner! and thou canst not be delivered from them but by turning unto God. Thou art fallen under his wrath by thy sin already: and thou knowest not how long his patience will yet wait. Perhaps this is the last year, perhaps the last day. His sword is even at thy heart, while the word is in thine ear; and if thou turn not, thou art a dead and undone man. Were thine eyes but open to see where thou standest, even upon the brink of hell, and to see how many thousands are there already who did not turn, thou wouldst see that it is time to look about thee.

Well, sirs, look inwards now and tell me, how are your hearts affected with these offers of the Lord? You hear what is his mind; he delighteth not in your death: he calls to you, Turn, turn: it is a fearful sign, if all this move thee not, or if it do but half move thee; and much more if it make thee more careless in thy misery, because thou hearest of the mercifulness of God. The working of the medicine will partly tell us whether there be any hope of the cure. Oh, what glad tidings would it be to those who are now in hell, if they had but such a message from God! What a joyful word would it be to hear this, Turn and live: yea, what a welcome word would it be to thyself, when thou hast felt that wrath of God but an hour! or, if after a thousand, or ten thousand years' torment, thou couldst but

ST. LUKE XIII. 1—9.

hear such a word from God, Turn and live. And yet wilt thou now neglect it, and suffer us to return without our errand!

Behold, sinners, we are sent here as the messengers of the Lord, to set before you life and death. What say you? Which of them will you choose? Christ standeth as it were by thee, with heaven in one hand, and hell in the other, and offereth thee thy choice: which wilt thou choose? "The voice of the Lord maketh the rocks to tremble," Psal. xxix; and is it nothing, to hear him threaten thee, if thou wilt not turn? Dost thou not understand and feel this voice, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Why, it is the voice of love, of infinite love, of thy best and kindest friend, as thou mightest easily perceive by the motion; and yet canst thou neglect it? It is the voice of pity and compassion. The Lord seeth whither thou art going better than thou dost, which makes him call after thee, Turn, turn. He seeth what will become of thee, if thou turn not. He thinketh with himself, "Ah, this poor sinner will cast himself into endless torments, if he do not turn; I must in justice deal with him according to my righteous law;" and therefore he calleth after thee, Turn, turn, O sinner! If you did but know the thousandth part, as well as God doth, the danger that is near you, and the misery that you are running into, we should have no more need to call after you to turn.—BAXTER.

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, &c.—The great Lord

is himself the planter of the vineyard; his own hand sets each tree, and the soil is fruitful; there is sap and moisture. This is to be understood of his visible church and ordinances, for the planting here is that. Christians are much compared to things living, growing, and fruitful, to the vine and fig tree; there is such high engagement to be so, Isaiah v, and real Christians are truly so. (And he sought fruit thereon.) Good reason had he so to do, having so planted it; those trees that are left wild in the barren wilderness, no fruit is to be expected on them, at least no garden fruit, such as grows in the garden of God; some natures have some kinds of fruits, and some sweeter than others, but they are but wild figs. God's delight is to "come into his garden, and there eat his pleasant fruits." Natural men may, after their fashion, be temperate, and patient, and charitable; but to believe on God, and to love him above themselves, and from such principles to do all they do, this is not to be expected. Now all that are planted in the Church of God, are, in name, such trees as should have their sap in them, that is faith and love, and bear answerable fruits: they are called "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified;" Isaiah xli. He himself knows who are indeed such, and knows that the rest can bear no such fruit; yet in regard of outward dispensations, and their own profession, he speaks after the manner of men: "he comes and seeks fruit." Men think that they may

ST. LUKE XIII. 1—9.

live in the face of the church, and make use of his ordinances, and yet be as excusably barren of all the fruits of holiness, as if they grew upon a common heath: it is strange they should not perceive their own folly, and know that God reckons otherwise, and according to the ground he hath set them in, and manuring he bestows on them, looks for some suitable fruit. Oh, what joy and glory were it to our God, to have unobserved, obscure Christians abounding in sweet spiritual fruits, loaded with fruit, and hanging down the head, stooping the lower, still the more humble for it, referring all to himself, living to him, doing all for him. Now, for this are requisite, —first, much prayer, for though he speaks here as an ordinary master, yet it is his secret influence does all, “From me is thy fruit found,” and prayer draws down that: secondly, much faith in Christ, living to him and drawing sap from him; such as do all in his strength, and are much in application and attraction, shall be found the most abundant in all choice of sweet fruits.—LLEWELLYN.

Lord, let it alone this year also, &c.
—It is the voice of every mercy thou dost possess. If thou couldst but hear and understand them, they all cry out unto thee, Turn. Why doth the earth bear thee, but to seek and serve the Lord? Why doth it afford thee its fruit, but to serve him? Why doth the air afford thee breath but to serve him? Why do all the creatures serve thee with their labours and their lives, but that thou mightest serve the Lord of them and

thee? Why doth he give thee time, and health, and strength, but to serve him? Why hast thou meat, and drink, and clothes, but for his service? Hast thou anything which thou hast not received? And if thou didst receive them, it is reasonable thou shouldst bethink thee, from whom, and to what end and use, thou didst receive them? Didst thou never cry to him for help in thy distress? and didst thou not then understand that it was thy part to turn and serve him if he would deliver thee? He hath done his part, and spared thee yet longer, and tried thee another and another year; and yet dost thou not turn? You know the parable of the unfruitful fig tree, Luke xiii. 6—9. When the Lord had said, Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? he was entreated to try it one year longer, and then, if it proved not fruitful, to cut it down. Christ himself there makes the application twice over, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,” ver. 3—5. How many years hath God looked for the fruits of love and holiness from thee, and hath found none! and yet he hath spared thee. How many a time by thy wilful ignorance, and carelessness, and disobedience hast thou provoked justice to say, Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground? and yet mercy hath prevailed, and patience hath forborne the killing blow to this day. If thou hadst the understanding of a man within thee, thou wouldst know that all this calleth thee to turn. Rom. ii. 3—6.
—BAXTER.

HYMN.

The Lord of earth and sky,
The God of ages, praise,
Who reigns anthon'd on high,
Ancient of endless days,
Who lengthens out our trial here
And spares us yet another year.

Barren and wither'd trees
We cumber'd long the ground ;
No fruit of holiness
On our dead souls was found :
Yet doth he us in mercy spare
Another and another year.

When justice rais'd the sword
To cut the fig-tree down,
The pity of our Lord
Cried " Let it still alone :"
The Father mild inclines his ear,
And spare us yet another year.

Jesus, thy speaking blood
From God obtain'd the grace,
Who, therefore, hath bestow'd
On us a longer space :
Thou didst in our behalf appear
And lo! we see another year.

Then dig about our root,
Break up our fallow ground ;
And let our holy fruit
To thy great planks abound ;
So shall we all thy blessings share
And fruit unto perfection bear.

WESLEY.

§ CC.

CHAP. XIII. 10—21.

Christ healeth the crooked woman ; and sheweth the powerful working of the word in the hearts of his chosen, by the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and of leaven.

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 ¶ And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 ⁶ And he laid *his hands* on her : and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, ⁶ There are six days in which men ought to work : in them therefore come and be healed, and ⁶ not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou hypocrite*, ⁶ doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his ass* from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering ?

16 And ought not this woman, ⁷ being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day ?

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed : and all the people rejoiced for all the

glorious things that were done by him.

18 ¶ Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

¶ Mark xvi. 18. Acts ix. 17.—c Ex. xx. 9.—d Mat. xii. 10.—Mark iii. 2. ch. vi. 7; and xlv. 3.—e ch. xiv. 9.—f ch. xix. 9.—g Mat. xiii. 31. Mark iv. 30.—| See Mat. xiii. 33.

READER.—*And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, &c.*—Consider this woman's infirmity.—What was its origin? Sin. Had this never entered into the world, there had not been either pain, distortion, or death. Who was the agent in it? Satan; ver. 16. God has often permitted demons to act on and in the bodies of men and women. What was the nature of this infirmity? She was bowed together, bent down to the earth, a situation equally painful and humiliating; the violence of which she could not support, and the shame of which she could not conceal. What was the duration of this infirmity?

568

Eighteen years; a long time to be under the constant and peculiar influence of the devil. What was the effect of it? The woman was so bowed together that she could in no case stand straight, or look toward heaven.

Jesus saw her, &c.—Consider the woman's cure. Jesus saw her. Notwithstanding her infirmity was great, painful, and shameful, she took care to attend the synagogue. While she hoped for help from God, she saw it was her duty to wait in the appointed way, in order to receive it. Jesus saw her distress, and the desire she had both to worship her Maker and to get her health restored,—and his eye affected his heart. He called her to him. Her heart and her distress spoke loudly, though her lips were silent; and as she was then calling for help, Jesus calls her to himself that she might receive help. Jesus laid his hands on her. The hand of his holiness terrifies, and the hand of his power expels, the demon. Ordinances, however excellent, will be of no avail to a sinner, unless he apprehend Christ in them. Immediately she was made straight. This cure was—a speedy one, it was done in an instant;—a perfect one, she was made completely whole;—a public one, there were many to attest and render it credible;—a stable and permanent one, she was loosed, for ever loosed, from her infirmity. Her soul partook of the good done to her body, she glorified God. As she knew before that it was Satan who had bound her, she knew that it was only God who could loose her; and now, feeling

that she is loosed, she gives God that honour which is due unto his name.

And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, &c.—Consider the conduct of the ruler of the synagogue on this occasion. He answered with indignation. It would seem as if the demon who had left the woman's body had got into his heart. It is not an unfrequent case to find a person filled with rage and madness, while beholding the effects of Christ's power upon others. Perhaps, like this ruler, he pretends zeal and concern for the honour of religion. "These preachings, prayer-meetings, convictions, conversions, &c., are not carried on in his way, and therefore they cannot be of God." Let such take care lest, while denying the operation of God's hand, they be given up to demonic influence.—He endeavours to prevent others from receiving the kind help of the blessed Jesus. Men of this character who have extensive influence do immense harm: they often hinder others from hearing that word which is able to save their souls. But for this also they must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Reader, hast thou ever acted in this way?—Jesus retorts his condemnation with peculiar force; ver. 15, 16. Thou hypocrite! to pretend zeal for God's glory, when it is only the workings of thy malicious, unfeeling, and uncharitable heart. Wouldst thou not even take thine ass to water on the Sabbath day? And wouldst thou deprive a daughter of Abraham (one of thy own nation and religion) of the mercy and goodness of God upon the Sabbath? Was not the Sabbath in-

stituted for the benefit of man?—His adversaries were ashamed. The mask of their hypocrisy, the only covering they had, is taken away; and now they are exposed to the just censure of that multitude whom they deceived, and from whom they expected continual applause. The indignation and uncharitable censure of this chief of the synagogue not only turned to his own confusion, but were made instruments of the edification of the multitude. They rejoiced at all the glorious things which Jesus did. Thus, O Lord, the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder thereof thou shalt restrain!—A. CLARKE.

These considerations are applicable to the spiritual malady of our fallen nature, and to our spiritual cure by the great physician of the soul.

It is like a grain of mustard seed, &c.—This parable is an image of the progress of the gospel in the world; of the growth of grace in the soul; of the increase of the church of Christ, established on the lowliness of God manifest in the flesh. The Saviour's abasement is impressed on all the transactions of his life, and on the hearts and lives of his followers. Let us cherish and cultivate this divine humility.

The least of all seeds may represent truth, abased in this world to be exalted in the world to come. This is the joy of the saints, and their eternal rest; and they possess here below its first fruits in their heart. The lowlier in this world, the higher in heaven. Self abasement is our duty; it is with God to give us increase and elevation. What are often the first impressions

of grace, the first motions of faith in the soul, but a little spark kindling the flame of love; a grain of mustard seed filling the heart with its strength and efficacy? Let us neglect nothing, despise nothing; the fruit must answer to the seed."—QUESNEL.

It is like leaven, which a woman took, &c.—Whatsoever we do, every exercise of mind, soul, or body, is offensive unto God unless leavened by faith and charity. The union of God and man in Jesus Christ; the word of evangelical truth sent forth into the world; the spirit of God renewing the sinner's heart;—may be compared to the effects of leaven; they are mysterious means, discovered by the wisdom of God, for making man spiritual, raising him to the love of heavenly things, and creating him anew in the image of God. May this divine leaven renew our hearts, and be within them a holy principle, changing their earthward tendency, and attracting them unalterably to heavenly things.

Grace penetrates the soul, elevates and transforms it; changing the whole man into a new creature, the darkness of the mind into the light of heaven, the concupiscence of the heart into holy affections, and the corruption of the senses into a wise and sanctified restraint. O when shall we be thus, in all our faculties, filled with the light of God's glory, and with the power of his divinity! When shall the promised kingdom come, and the reign of God be complete in us!—QUESNEL.

HYMN.

Holy Spirit, from on high
Bend on us a pitying eye;
Animate the drooping heart,
Bid the power of sin depart.

Light up every dark recess
Of our hearts' ungodliness;
Shew us every devious way
Where our steps have gone astray.

Teach us with repentant grief
Humbly to implore relief;
Then the Saviour's blood reveal,
All our deep disease to heal.

Other groundwork should we lay
Sweep those empty hopes away;
Make us feel that Christ alone
Can for human guilt atone.

May we daily grow in grace
And pursue the heavenly race,
Train'd in wisdom, led by love,
Till we reach our rest above.

BATHURST.

§ CCI.

CHAP. XIII. 22—35.

Christ exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate; and reproveth Herod and Jerusalem.

22 ^a And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

23 Then said one unto him, Lord, 'are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 ¶^a Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for 'many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 ^m When once the master of the house is risen up, and

‘hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying ‘Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, ‘I know you not whence ye are :

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 ‘But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are ; ‘depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 ‘There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, ‘when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 ‘And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

31 ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence : for Herod will kill thee.

32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do

cures to day and to morrow, and the third day ‘I shall be perfected.

33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following : for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34 ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee ; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.

35 Behold, ‘your house is left unto you desolate : and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

A Mat. ix. 35.—Mark vi. 6.—12 Fed. viii. 1, 2.—A Mat. vii. 13.—I See John vii. 34, and viii. 21, and xiii. 33. Rom. ix. 31.—m Ps. xxxii. 6. Is. lv. 6.—n Mat. xxv. 10.—o ch. vi. 46.—p Mat. vii. 24, and xxv. 12.—q Mat. vii. 24, and xxv. 41. ver. 25.—r Ps. vi. 8. Mat. xxv. 41.—s Mat. viii. 12, and xiii. 42, and xxiv. 51.—t Mat. viii. 11.—u Mat. xix. 30, and xx. 16. Mark x. 51.—v Heb. ii. 10.—w Mat. xxii. 37.—x Lev. xxvi. 31, 32. Is. i. 7. Dan. ix. 27. Mic. iii. 12.—y Ps. cxviii. 26. Mat. xxi. 9. Mark xi. 10. ch. xix. 38. John xii. 13.

READER.—*Strive to enter in at the strait gate, &c.*—See Commentary on Matthew VII. 13, 14, in § XXVI.

I know you not whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.—On the folly and vanity of religious profession without religious principle and practice, see the Commentary on Matthew VII. 21, 29, in § XXVII.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, &c.—See Commentary on Matthew XIII. 34, 35, in § LXXV.

§ CCII.

CHAP. XIV. 1—14.

Christ healeth the dropsy on the Sabbath; teaching humility;—to feast the poor.

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answeringspake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?"

4 And they held their peace. And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him go;

5 And answered them, saying, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?"

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any *man* to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him.

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 "But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, no *thy* rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompence thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

ST. LUKE XIV. 1—14.

^a Mat. xli. 10.—^b Ex. xxiii. 5. Deut. xlii. 4. ch. xlii. 15.—^c Prov. xxv. 6, 7.—^d Job xxii. 29. Ps. xviii. 27. Prov. xxix. 23. Mat. xxiii. 12. ch. xviii. 14; Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.—^e Neh. viii. 10, 12, Tob. ii. 2; and iv. 7.

READER.—*And it came to pass, &c.*
—If our review of the life of Jesus affect us as it ought, it will not only produce in us an admiration of his excellency; who is “fairer than the children of men,” but regulate our conduct, and sanctify our dispositions. While we “behold the glory of the Lord” we shall be “changed into the same image.” Let us pray continually that we may feel this influence from his example; so shall we be followers of the Lord, “not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.”

Jesus was travelling through Galilee towards Jerusalem; and, probably in that journey, a principal Pharisee, a man of rank, invited him to dinner. It might seem an act of condescension in a person of eminence to ask or admit such a guest into his house as appeared to be greatly his inferior; but a favour was conferred on the Pharisee rather than on Jesus. The most exalted monarch might have said with reason, “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.” It was an instance of “the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” that he vouchsafed to converse freely with sinful creatures, and discovered no distance in his behaviour. He readily gave his company to those who desired it; not indeed for his own pleasure, or the convenience of eating with them, but for their benefit. He sought not his own profit, but

the profit of many, that they might be saved.

As this occurred on the Sabbath, we infer that religion does not require us to refuse all intercourse with others throughout that day. There may be proper occasions for friendly visits in some parts of it; but we should be careful to maintain a spirit and a conversation suitable to its grand design. The example of Jesus cannot be adduced in vindication of that vanity and dissipation by which it is so generally perverted and profaned.

It should seem that many persons were assembled at the Pharisee’s house, and such as were not well affected to Jesus; for “they watched him.” Perhaps the invitation was given, not from kindness but malevolence, on purpose to pass the most invidious censures upon him. How odious the disposition of those who are eagle-eyed in scrutinizing the conduct of others, and who rejoice to find any real objections against them! And yet you, who are the faithful disciples of Jesus, are frequently placed in the midst of such malignant observers. Their attention is fixed upon you, with a view, not to commend what is laudable, but to discover and expose your faults, that so they may reproach that holy name by which you are called. You, therefore, should be vigilant as well as they, that their wishes may be defeated, and themselves ashamed, when they shall see the wisdom and consistency of your deportment.

A person who was present, afflicted with the dropsy, excited the compas-

sionate regard of Jesus. He, however, knowing that the lawyers and Pharisees before him were seeking for an accusation against him, appealed to them whether it would be any violation of the Sabbath to perform a cure on that day. They were unable to reply, while he, unmindful of their censures, instantly restored the deceased man to perfect health; observing that, however they might object to this act of mercy they would none of them scruple to relieve their very cattle in distress. They felt the force of his words, and were confounded. Thus, likewise, it frequently happens that the enemies of religion are suddenly restrained and abashed, by a serious remark or a solemn address to their consciences. Let us not therefore be deterred by their invidious designs, but persevere in the path of duty.

Jesus not only justified himself, but reproved them for their pride and love of precedency. He took notice that they were all ambitious of the highest seat at the table; and argued that such a contention for places of honour was extremely disgusting, and that it would be much more becoming to give way to others. He showed that an arrogant spirit is odious, and while it claims respect, incurs contempt; and, on the contrary, that a modest and humble deportment, which seems to shun observation, invariably conciliates esteem. This is the case in the common intercourse of men; and it holds true, if we apply it to our temper and conduct towards God: "He resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the hum-

ble." Who will not allow that it is incumbent on us, in his presence, to take the lowest room? Yet how little are the apostolic injunctions regarded or understood, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves;" "in honour preferring one another."

Jesus continued to deliver the most serious instructions and admonitions to the company before him. With a reference, no doubt, to their general spirit and practice, while he addressed himself to the person who had invited him, he condemned the custom of providing sumptuous and costly entertainments merely for their relations and opulent neighbours, and recommended an attention to the relief and comfort of the afflicted, in all their various distresses. How much extravagance prevails in supporting magnificent tables for the reception of those who want nothing! The large sums which are thus expended serve only to feed our own pride and sensuality. But what a sordid parsimony is shewn in contributing to the support of the truly necessitous, who can make us no returns! Those, however, are blessed, who, from faith and love unfeigned, "deal their bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to their houses." (Is. lviii. 7.) The Lord of heaven will consider himself as their debtor; and will render them an abundant recompense in the great day of retribution.—ROBINSON.

ST. LUKE XIV. 15—24.

HYMN.

When Jesus dwelt in mortal clay,
What were his works from day to day,
But miracles of power and grace
That spread salvation through our race!

Teach us, O Lord, to keep in view
Thy pattern, and thy steps pursue ;
Let alms bestowed, let kindness done,
Be witnessed by each rolling sun.

That man may last, but never lives,
Who much receives, but nothing gives ;
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank.

But he who marks, from day to day,
With generous acts his radiant way,
Treads the same path his Saviour trod,
The path to glory and to God.

§ CCIII.

CHAP. XIV. 15—24.

Under the parable of the great supper, Christ sheweth how worldly-minded men, who contemn the word of God, shall be shut out of heaven.

15 ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 'Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many :

17 And [^]sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come ; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one

consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it ; I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them : I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, 'That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

f Rev. xix. 9.—g Mat. xxii. 2.—A Prov. ix. 26.—f Mat. xxi. 43; & xxii. 8. Acts xiii. 46.

See § LXX.

Matthew XXII. 1—14.

§ CCIV.

CHAP. XIV. 25—35.

Those who will be Christ's disciples, to bear their cross must make their accounts beforehand, lest with shame they revolt from him afterward, and become altogether unprofitable, like salt that hath lost its savour.

25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with him : and he turned, and said unto them,

26 * If any *man* come to me, 'and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, " yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And " whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For ° which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it ?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with

ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand ?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 ¶ ' Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned ?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill ; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

A Deut. xiii. 6; & xxxiii. 9. Mat. x. 37.—I Rom. ix. 13.—m Rev. xii. 11.—n Mat. xvi. 26. Mark viii. 34. ch. ix. 28. 2 Tim. iii. 12.—o Prov. xxiv. 27.—p Mat. v. 12. Mark ix. 50.

READER.—*Which of you intending to build a tower, &c.*—If a man has a house to build, before he lays one stone, he considers what the charge may be, whether he is able, and whether he is resolved, to lay out so much upon it. And he that would be a disciple of Christ, if he does not resolve beforehand to do what Christ expects from his faithful servants, will not only become a scandal to his profession, but will certainly come short of of what he hopes for by being a Christian. Therefore, to carry on the design of this parable:—As a man, who is about to undertake any work of moment, would be glad to be informed what difficulties he is

likely to meet with,—what will be necessary to bring his work to perfection,—how much he will be a loser if he miscarries,—it is as necessary that every person, who takes upon himself the profession of a Christian, should beforehand know—First, what God will expect from him. Secondly, what discouragements he will certainly meet with. Thirdly, what assistances he may depend upon. Lastly, what means he must use to gain the end of his faith, which is, the salvation of his soul. And these are the particulars which, by the good grace of God, I now propose to explain to you.

I. And in the first place, every person who desires to be a Christian, that he may live and die in the favour of God, will desire to know what he must do to please God. We all know that we must renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, that we must believe in God, and keep his commandments. But it is not enough to know, and to say this, unless you resolve to live like people that really believe this to be their duty and their interest. Whoever hopes to go to heaven when he dies, must be in earnest while he lives, to fit himself for it. This is signified in the text, by sitting down and counting the cost; intimating thus much,—that if I think I ought to be a Christian I ought likewise seriously and often to think what it is to be one. I ought often to consider the promises which God hath made to such as fear and serve him to the

best of their power,—that my heart being full of the sense of my own unworthiness, and God's goodness, may very cheerfully and thankfully do whatever I shall at any time be convinced will please him.

And being thus honestly disposed to do your duty, you shall never want means of knowing it, or what you do shall never be laid to your charge. After all, you must not expect that the way to Heaven and happiness is smooth and easy, and that you will meet with no trouble in getting there. Jesus Christ has told you otherwise: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Agreeably to this, the Scriptures speak of suffering for the sake of Christ,—“of taking up the cross,” as he did before us—“of denying one's self—of enduring afflictions, suffering wrongfully.”

II. Now, you must not imagine, that these Scriptures do not belong to you, for in truth they do. It is as true now, as it was in the very beginning of the Gospel: “every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.” This is what you must expect, and it is fit you should know it beforehand, that you may resolve to overcome every difficulty, rather than come short of Heaven. And this was the second particular that I proposed to explain to you.

When you became a member of the Church of Christ, you promised “to renounce the devil, and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.” From that to your

dying day, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, are your declared enemies, and you must expect to find trouble in resisting them. You must resolve upon this, or else you do not purpose to lead a Christian life.

III. The Word of God assures us, and by experience we find, that all our good purposes and designs will come to nothing, unless the spirit of God be with us, to encourage, to support, and to strengthen us. Consider the blessing of being under the government of the Spirit of God: for then no temptation can overcome you;—the Devil cannot hurt you, for greater is he that is with you, than he that is against you. You will, by his assistance, learn to despise this world, and set your affections upon a much better. You will be enabled, by that same Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, that you may live,—live as free from sin as may be here, and for ever in Heaven. For this good Spirit will enlighten your mind with saving truths; when you go astray will pull you back; when you grow careless will awaken you; when you want help will assist you; when you want comfort will rejoice your heart; when you do well will encourage you; and, when you do amiss, will correct and chasten you, until he brings you to Heaven, when all your trouble and your danger will be over; and, for the short trials you have undergone in this life, you will be made happy for ever and ever.

IV. And now you will desire to know, by what means this good Spirit is to be secured,—how you may attain the end of your faith and Christian

profession; namely, the salvation of your souls; which was the last particular we proposed to speak to. The Holy Psalmist set himself, as he tells us, this rule: “I set God always before me, therefore I shall not fall.” That is, he endeavoured to have these thoughts ever in his mind,—that God saw all his actions, heard all his words, and knew the very thoughts of his heart;—that he might not offend God, he therefore took care of his thoughts, words, and actions. But if at any time he had the misfortune to fall, his way was not to continue in rebellion: “I made haste,” saith he, “and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”

And thus must you do, if you hope for the continuance of God’s grace, must strive to live in the fear of God, remembering his judgments upon wilful sinners, frequently calling to mind the vows that are upon you, calling upon him in all your wants, and giving him thanks for every blessing you receive.

By this means, the knowledge of God will be ever present with you, and the Spirit of God will delight in you, and lead you in the way wherein you should go:—And if at any time you go astray, he will by the methods of his providence bring you back, that you may in the end be saved.

In the second place, be sure not to neglect any opportunities of improving yourselves in Christian knowledge and the grace of God, remembering, that to profane the Lord’s day,—to neglect the Holy Sacrament,—to despise the advice

ST. LUKE XV. 1—10.

and admonitions of your spiritual guides,—is to despise the Lord; and I need not tell you what they are to expect that do so. Be sure to let no day pass without begging God's pardon and blessing;—for to neglect this duty is a sure way to lead you into an indifference for God and goodness.—WILSON.

HYMN.

And is this life prolong'd to me?
Are days and seasons given?
O let me then prepare to be
A fitter heir of heaven!

In vain these moments shall not pass,
These golden hours be gone;
Lord, I accept thine offer'd grace,
I bend before thy throne.

Now cleanse my soul from every sin
By my Redeemer's blood;
Now let my flesh and soul begin
The honour of my God.

Let me no more my soul beguile
With sin's deceitful toys:
Let cheerful hope increasing still
Approach to heavenly joys.

My thankful lips shall loud proclaim
The wonders of thy praise;
And spread the savour of thy name,
Where'er I spend my days.

WATTS.

§ CCV.

CHAP. XV. 1—10.

The parable of the lost sheep, of the piece of silver.

THEN ^adrew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This

man receiveth sinners, ^band eateth with them.

3 ¶ And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4 ^cWhat man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep ^dwhich was lost.

7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, ^emore than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8 ¶ Either what woman having ten ^fpieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it*?

9 And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you,

ST. LUKE XV. 1—10.

there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

o Mat. ix. 10.—d Acts xi. 8. Gal. ii. 12.—c Mat. xviii. 12.—d 1 Pet. ii. 10, 25.—e ch. v. 32.—f *Drachma*, here translated a piece of silver, is the eighth part of an ounce, which cometh to sevenpence halfpenny; and is equal to the Roman penny. Mat. xviii. 28

READER. *The Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. It is true, and ought to be a matter for unceasing thankfulness, that the Lord Jesus came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*

He came not to call such persons as think they have righteousness enough of their own to serve their turn,—for such persons think they have no need of him, and therefore it would be in vain to call them; but he calls sinners, such as may, perhaps, be as righteous as the others, but they do not think themselves to be so, but look upon themselves as undone for ever, unless they have something else to trust to, than their own good works, and obedience to the moral law. Such persons, therefore, Christ came to call, and if they come to him, they cannot but find rest and righteousness in him. And if any of us desire to go after Christ, so as to be his disciple, we must be sure to look upon ourselves as sinners, as deserving nothing but wrath and vengeance for whatsoever we have done:—we must renounce all our own righteousness, and be so far from depending upon it as to think we have none to depend upon,—for so really we have not. And when we have laid aside all thoughts of our own righteousness, as to the matter

of justification before God, then, and not till then, shall we be rightly qualified to embrace another's, even that righteousness which is by faith in Christ.—BEVERIDGE.

"I say unto you that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The Pharisees were much offended with our Lord for shewing so much concern for sinners as to keep them company in order to teach them their duty, and to convince them of their danger. Our Lord assures them by these three parables (of the lost sheep, the piece of silver, and the prodigal son,) that God is well pleased when sinners are converted; that the angels rejoice at it; and that such as are at the pains to bring back poor, ignorant, or wicked people, that have gone astray like lost sheep, do a work very acceptable to God, and God will reward them for it. In short, our Lord has by these similitudes discovered to us one of the most comfortable truths in the world, which is, that when men have offended God, yet if they become sensible of their sin and truly sorry for it, God will pardon what is past and take them into favour, as if they had never offended him.

What is the reason that we can hear such Holy Scriptures as these without being moved? The reason is plain: we do not consider that we are sinners; we do not know what it is to be a sinner; we are not sensible that every sinner is liable to the anger of God, is as one *lost and undone*, until he repent and be restored to God's favour.

ST. LUKE XV. 1—10.

Would you know the condition of a sinner, whose conscience is awake, and lets him see his sin and his condition? Look upon *David*, when he had been guilty of adultery and murder: hear how *he* expresses his grief, (Psalm xxxviii.) "My sorrow is continually before me; for mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me."—Look upon *St. Peter*, when he had denied his Lord, and thought upon it, you will find him *weeping bitterly*.—See the Publican in the temple; he dares not so much as lift up his eyes, but smites upon his breast and cries, "God be merciful unto me a sinner." In one word, consider the penitent woman at the feet of Jesus *washing his feet with her tears*. What was all this for? Our Lord will tell you, "her sins were many;" Christ had forgiven her upon her repentance; and thus she expresses her love and thankfulness. She looked upon it as the greatest *mercy* in the world, to be restored to the favour of God, and she could not but shew it by her love and by her tears. And if we are not thus affected, when we consider how merciful God has been to us, it is because we are not truly sensible what it is to be out of his favour, what it is to be under his displeasure. In short, it is because our consciences were never well awake.

They that are whole (or think themselves so) care not for a physician, but they that are sick. "Come unto me," saith our Lord, "all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When once

it is thus with men, they will hear these parables with delight, and receive the doctrines contained in them with cheerfulness.

They will understand, for instance, with the greatest satisfaction imaginable, that by the *Shepherd*, who went to seek his *lost sheep*, is meant Jesus Christ, *who came into the world to seek and to save sinners*: when they hear what pains he took to find it; how he took it upon his shoulders; how he rejoiced that he had found it, &c., they will then apply this parable to themselves; they will see plainly that God desires their conversion; that if he desires it, he will afford them all the means of being converted; that their souls are dear in his sight, or else he would not have sent his own Son to seek and to save them; then they will see and acknowledge the tender love of this good Shepherd, who spared no pains to find his lost sheep; they will therefore love him, desire to please him, and not willingly do anything that may justly offend him.

And when they hear again the parable of the *Woman* that had lost a piece of silver, what concern she had upon her, what pains she took to find it, what pleasure she had when she had found it, they will easily see that all this is matter of the greatest comfort to sinners; that if the angels rejoice upon the conversion of a sinner, it is because God is pleased with it, and because they know that God will not reject any that return to him.

And they will be still more convinced of this, when they go on to

consider the circumstances of the *Prodigal Son*. He left his father's house without his leave ; that which his father gave him to maintain him decently he spent upon harlots ; he never thought upon his father, nor the sad affliction he gave him, till he could live nowhere else : these are all instances of a vile behaviour ; and yet, after all, the father receives him without upbraiding him, and treats him after such a manner as if he had never done amiss. And will God thus deal with sinners, that return to him after all their wanderings ; who being sensible of their unhappy condition, desire his pardon and favour ? Yes, thus God will deal with his unhappy creatures ; *unhappy* because they have offended him, but *happy* in having such a father, so full of goodness, so ready to pardon. Will any sinner after this say, I would willingly return, if I could hope that God would receive and pardon me ? A sinner may indeed say, I will not forsake my sins ; I will not ask pardon ; I will not return to my duty ; but no man can say, if I should desire to return to God, he will not receive me.—WILSON.

HYMN.

Who can describe the joys that rise,
Thro' all the courts of paradise,
To see a prodigal return,
To see an heir of glory born ?
With joy the Father doth approve,
The fruit of his eternal love ;
The Son looks down with joy, and sees
The purchase of his agonies.
The Spirit takes delight to view
The holy soul he form'd anew ;
And saints and angels join to sing
The growing empire of their King.

WATTS.

§ CCVI.

CHAP. XV. 11—32.

The parable of the Prodigal Son.

11 ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons :

12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to *me*. And he divided unto them *'his* living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land ; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger !

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him,

Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But ^e when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, ^a and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 ^f For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted

calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: ^g for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

^f Mark xii. 44.—^g Acts ii. 20. Eph. ii. 12, 17.—^a Ps. ii. 4.—^e ver. xxxii. Eph. ii. 1; & v. 14. Rev. iii. 1.—^h ver. 24.

READER.—*And the younger of them said to his father, &c.*—The Prodigal is a lively image of the sinner. We learn from his example how dangerous it is to throw off restraint, live in independence, and assume the government of self. The strongest mark of the divine displeasure is when God grants the desire of our

corrupt and proud heart, and leaves us to ourselves. What is man's light and wavering will, when withdrawn from the guidance and direction of the supreme and unchangeable will? In its healthy state it threw off its salutary dependence and chose perdition: how much more then does it require the aid of its Restorer, now that it is blind, diseased, and infirm?

Man cannot long continue under his own guidance, without being made sensible that he is led by blindness and delusion. The sinner's misery has its degrees of aggravation, and he commonly reaches its extremity step by step.

1. He loses sight of God and departs from him. 2. The love of God no longer prevailing in his heart, sensuality necessarily bears sway, and corrupts the whole. 3. He loses all spirituality of mind. 4. Having abandoned God, and lost his grace and his love, he is given over to poverty, wretchedness, and want. It is just that he who has sought for happiness without God, should find when at a distance from him, nothing but affliction, indigence, distress. How disastrous is the poverty of the heart which has wasted its spiritual treasure—how wasting the famine of the heart no longer nourished by the heavenly bread! 5. The sinner becomes the bondman of the devil, The farther we depart from the sovereign good, the deeper the darkness of the mind; the heavier the yoke imposed by appetite upon the will. 6. The sinner feels the rigour of his slavery.

No master so severe as Satan, no bondage so oppressive as that of sin: no servitude so degrading as the slavery of passion. 7. The sinner, deprived of all legitimate and innocent enjoyment, craves after the husks of carnal and covetous desire; his pleasures are those of swine, earthly and sensual, wallowing in mire and uncleanness.

The course of the parable now brings us to note the progress of conversion—*He came unto himself.* 1. The sinner is awakened to the misery and corruption of his heart; but how shall he awake, unless the light which he was the first to quit, be the first to draw nigh, and to seek him in the abyss of his darkness? We come to ourselves when God returns to our hearts; as we leave ourselves when we leave God. As it is the last and lowest wretchedness when God permits the sinner to sleep amid the guilty delights of sin, undisturbed by conscience, so is it the commencement of returning happiness, to feel the misery of sin, and to covet the felicity of God's servants.

The *second* step in conversion, is when the sinner is enabled to resolve on quitting sin and sinful circumstances—*I will arise.* Whatever be the motive, how much soever tainted by feelings of interest or inconvenience; however imperfect and little distinguished by real antipathy to sin itself, still it cannot be too promptly obeyed. Grace, in the event, sanctifies all its own purposes.

The *third* stage is when the sinner turns unto God—*I will go unto*

my Father—and hastens towards his heavenly parent, without a moment's delay, since misery can never be too speedily rejected, nor can there be greater folly than to risk, by lingering, misery everlasting.

The *fourth* advance in conversion is the sinner's confession of guilt. *Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee.* Love to God is the foundation of true repentance. The strongest motive for hating sin is to be found in its hostility to his graciousness, and, in the conviction that it offends him who is the best of fathers.

The sinner humbles himself in conscious unworthiness of the grace and mercy of God.—*I am unworthy to be called thy son.* Love and the spirit of adoption give us the right to call God our Father. We lose that right when we put away that affection, and when that spirit retires. The confession of unworthiness is an acknowledgment of humiliation deserved; and we welcome humiliation when we love God, because it is in the order of his justice.

6. The sinner cherishes a spirit of submissive humility—*make me as one of thy hired servants.* Without this temper and frame of mind there is no true contrition, and the mercy of God is renounced. The spirit of penitence delights in the lowest, hardest, and longest service.

God anticipates the returning sinner. Parental kindness has prompted the return, and parental tenderness marks the reception. He pours consolation into the contrite heart, and gives the assurance of pardon,

and the seal of reconciliation. But the signs of God's goodness will never deaden the feelings of sincere repentance, nor take from the lowly spirit the temper of humility; yet in the very depths of his humiliation the strong affection of his heart emboldens him to cherish a filial confidence, and in his approaches to a throne of grace, to call upon a Father's name.

The more deeply the sinner humbles himself in the conviction of his unworthiness, the more freely will God bestow his blessings and his gifts. He will welcome him as his son; crown the grace of reconciliation by adding every other grace; clothe him with the righteousness of Christ, and confirm this new covenant by the impression of his Spirit, which is the seal of adoption, the pledge of the heavenly inheritance, and the earnest of the everlasting promise. He will give grace and strength to run in the way of His commands, victorious over temptation and the tempter. How joyful is the soul that has thus recovered its privilege of abiding in its Father's house, of feasting on heavenly food. Sinners, draw nigh and learn how good and merciful is the Lord! Happy is the man who trusteth in Him.

Nor will the contrite heart forget, that he who was thus *dead and is alive again, lost and is found* must henceforward live in the spirit of this resurrection. He will not live to the world which ruined him, nor to the sin which slew him, nor to himself who embraced that ruin and that

ST. LUKE XVI. 1—18.

death, but who found not of himself recovery and renewed life :—but unto him who became flesh that he might seek and save, died that sin might die, and rose again to give eternal life.—QUESNEL.

HYMN.

Father, again in Jesus' name we meet,
And bow in penitence beneath thy feet ;
Again to Thee our feeble voices raise,
To sue for mercy, and to sing thy praise.

Oh ! we would bless Thee for thy ceaseless
care,
And all thy work from day to day declare ;
Is not our life with hourly mercies crown'd ?
Does not thine arm encircle us around ?

Alas ! unworthy of thy boundless love,
Too oft our feet from Thee, our Father, rove ;
But now encourag'd by thy voice we come,
Returning sinners to a Father's home.

Oh by that name in which all fulness dwells !
Oh by that love which every love excels !
Oh by that blood so freely shed for sin !
Open bless'd mercy's gate, and take us in.

WHITFIELD.

§ CCVII.

CHAP. XVI. 1—18.

The parable of the Unjust Steward, and the hypocrisy of the covetous Pharisees.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward ; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee ? give an ac-

count of thy stewardship ; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do ? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship : I cannot dig : to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord ?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou ? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely : for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when ye fail, they may re-

ceive you into everlasting habitations.

10 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous 'mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 ¶ 'No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

14 And the Pharisees also, 'who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which 'justify yourselves before men: but 'God knoweth your hearts: for 'that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

16 'The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 'And it is easier for

heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 'Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

¶ The word *Batus* in the original containeth nine gallons three quarts: see Ezek. xiv. 10, 11, 14.—The word here interpreted a *measure* in the original containeth about fourteen bushels and a pottle.—a John xii. 26. Eph. v. 6. 1 Thess. v. 5.—d Dan. iv. 27. Mat. vi. 19; & xix. 21. ch. xi. 41. 1 Tim. ii. 17, 18, 19.—1 Or, *riches*.—c Mat. xxv. 31. ch. xix. 27.—1 Or, *riches*.—d Mat. vi. 24.—e Mat. xxiii. 14.—f ch. x. 29.—g Ps. v. 1. 9.—h 1 Sam. xvi. 7.—i Mat. iv. 17; & xi. 12, 13. ch. vii. 29.—k Ps. cii. 26, 27. 1a. xi. 8; ii. 6. Mat. v. 18. 1 Pet. i. 26.—l Mat. v. 32; & xix. 9. Mark x. 11. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

Reader. Some persons may perhaps require a little explanation of certain passages in this parable.

In the ninth verse our Saviour advises his disciples to make to themselves friends of, i.e. with or by means of, the mammon of unrighteousness, or the unrighteous mammon.

But then what are we to understand by "unrighteous mammon?" "Mammon" means riches or wealth; but "unrighteous mammon" in this place does not signify riches obtained in an unrighteous manner, or ill-gotten wealth. The word "unrighteous," in this connection, denotes, most probably, uncertain or deceitful. Compare verse 11. Our Lord says, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, i. e. make to yourselves friends by means of the uncertain riches of the world,—that *when ye fail*, i. e. when ye die, *they may receive you into everlasting habitations*. The word *they* is supposed by some commentators to refer to the poor or distressed persons who had been assisted by the pious possessors of

this world's riches, and so these objects of charity would be here represented as welcoming their benefactors into heaven. Others, however, suppose that the expression "they may receive you" is indefinite, and equivalent only to "you may be received:" and this interpretation is perhaps not liable to so many objections as the other. The whole verse may, therefore, be paraphrased thus:—"By a wise and charitable use of the uncertain riches of this world, make to yourselves friends in heaven, that when ye come to die, ye may be received into everlasting habitations."

Some persons may perhaps find difficulty in those words of the eighth verse, "The lord, i. e. his master, commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely." Now this does not signify that the master applauded his conduct:—and in fact we find, by another part of the history, that he expressed his highest displeasure at the fraudulent practices of which the steward had been guilty. We should observe, that it is not said, simply, "the master commended the unjust steward," but "he commended him because he had done wisely," i. e., for having acted wisely or cleverly; or, in other words, he gave him credit for ingenuity. As to the iniquitous manner in which he had *employed* his skill—the Lord made a very different remark, "Thou mayest be no longer steward:" and we may suppose that this fresh instance of dishonesty would only confirm him in his intention of discharging the unfaithful

steward from his office. And from the whole of this narrative, we may represent to ourselves the employer as addressing his steward in some such terms as these:—"I do not doubt that you are a person of great skill and address;—indeed I know few men who have displayed these qualities more than yourself:—but let me tell you, Sir, that all your ingenuity without honesty will not entitle you to my favour:—you know that the capacity for business, which ought to have been employed in promoting my interests, has really been exerted in attempting to defraud me:—and therefore, though you are doubtless very clever, yet I dismiss you from my service as a dishonest man."

It may be asked, why does our Saviour in the latter part of the parable dwell particularly upon the notice which was taken of *the art and dexterity* of the unfaithful steward, while he repeats nothing that was said respecting his injustice? The reason of this is obvious:—it was not his injustice which our Lord proposed for the imitation of his disciples, but his *wisdom* or *prudence*: not indeed that he enjoined them to exercise their wisdom in the same manner and for the same purposes as the unjust steward had done; but rather to employ *the same* kind of wisdom in a *different* manner, and for worthy purposes. "The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light:"—in other words, See how much prudence and wisdom are displayed by men in the management

of their temporal concerns! See how much art is employed for the accomplishment of unjust and wicked designs! And yet, at the same time, how foolish for the most part and how blind men are with regard to their eternal interests!

Do ye also, my disciples, employ your prudence and your wisdom, but employ them for proper ends. You know that all unjust deeds are wicked, and therefore to employ your prudence in compassing them is clearly *wrong*; to employ it in the management of your temporal affairs is certainly *right*;—but it is above all things *most important* and *most necessary* that you should employ it in studying your eternal interests. Seek, most earnestly, to become “wise unto salvation.”

READER. *The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*—Men are for the most part *serious* with regard to their temporal affairs. They do not appear to consider it a matter of indifference whether they shall or shall not succeed in their plans and their pursuits:—their eye is keen to discover a prospect of advantage, and they are active and laborious in endeavouring to realize their promising schemes;—they deliberate carefully concerning the best means of accomplishing their ends, and spare neither thought nor pains in order to ensure success. In a word, it is easy to discover that they are in earnest. Business, it is rightly said, must not be neglected. “What shall I do?”

said the unjust steward, “for the sake of a future provision? It is a matter of great moment—there is no time to be lost—something must be done, and that quickly—what steps then shall I take?” In like manner, what shall I *do*, says the man of business, that I may ensure or increase my profits?—What shall I do, whither shall I go, says the man of pleasure, that I may find or vary my amusements?—Now, if men were as *serious*, if they were as much *in earnest*, with respect to another world as they are with regard to this, there is another question which would be asked, and that is, “What must I do to be saved?” Here then is one religious lesson which may be taught us by the common practice of the world. “One thing is needful.” The salvation of the soul is a matter of the utmost importance. There is no time to be lost: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest;” Eccl. ix. 10. Something must be done, and that quickly. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” “So run that ye may obtain.” Such is the text which scripture furnishes:—it needs no commentator, it requires no learning to explain it;—let only the wisdom of the children of this world be the preacher, and we see what the discourse would be.—One man perhaps is leading a careless and wicked life, but he hopes to repent and reform hereafter—the cares of the world are at present so pressing—the allure-

ments of pleasure are just at this moment so inviting—that he cannot at this time bestow much attention on his spiritual interests. It shall be done, says he, at a more convenient season. No, says the preacher; you must not neglect your business for the sake of pleasure:—and whereas there is one thing which is needful above all others, that one must not be neglected for the sake of anything besides. Be serious, be instant, in the question which most of all concerns you, “What must I do to be saved?”

Another perhaps is exposed to the force of some peculiar temptation. A slight degree of care and precaution may place him beyond the reach of this temptation, and a due earnestness in the work of his salvation would determine him to adopt some prudent measure whereby the danger may be avoided:—and yet there is no such care,—nothing but a vain dependence on a strength which may be easily overcome, or a general wish or resolution which would be powerless whenever the temptation may come in all its force. But what says wisdom in such a case as this? Be serious. The question to be considered is, What shall I do to deliver my soul, by God’s help, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler? How may I either remove this temptation, or place myself as far as possible beyond its reach? And if there be no room for such a choice and effort as this, then be the more earnest in supplication for the aid of God’s Spirit, just as a man who may be unable to defend his temporal possessions

would be urgent in seeking protection from others.

Another person perhaps is a zealous professor of religion: professing it, that is, with a zeal with which it ought to be professed and also practised. But in this man’s case there is a deficiency in point of practice: much more is said than done: great concern is expressed for the honour of God, a high nominal value is set upon the happiness of heaven, and a just abhorrence is professed with regard to all manner of sin:—but yet, after all, little beyond words is to be discovered.—Would that such a professing child of light were as wise in his way as the children of this world. For what says their wisdom? The question for you to propose to yourself is not “What shall I say?” but “What shall I do?” not so much “what are *the words* wherewith I shall magnify the Most High,” as “what are the works wherewith I may glorify his name?” Not “How shall I talk most rapturously of heaven?” but “What shall I do that I may attain the greatest portion of its blessedness?” Not “How shall I declaim most vehemently against sin?” but “how shall I most effectually manifest my hatred of it?”

Thus, and in many other ways, are *seriousness* and *activity* in the affairs of religion enforced by the example of that worldly wisdom which was practised by the unjust steward when he sat down and deliberated within himself, “What shall I do?”

But again we discover in this man’s conduct, not only seriousness, but *forethought*. We find him in earnest re-

ST. LUKE XVI. 19—31.

specting a provision for himself *before* he is actually discharged from the stewardship. In this aspect also, the children of the world are, for the most part, wise in their generation. Who is there that would not accuse the steward not only of wickedness, but also of folly and shortsightedness, if he had delayed to make his arrangements until at length he may have possessed no opportunity of so doing? And yet how many are guilty of worse folly with regard to matters of far higher moment! How many are living in this world, without looking forward to and providing for the next!—occupied entirely about the trifles which are seen and soon to pass away, and forgetful of those which are not seen but are eternal! “We walk by faith,” says the Apostle, “not by sight.” We are called upon to regulate our desires and to fashion the course of our lives, not according to those things which are present, and before our eyes, but chiefly with reference to those unseen realities which are to be hereafter. We are called upon, as Lot was, to provide a place of refuge from the storm. And yet how many are heedless of the warning, and are taking no measures for their safety in the day of wrath! See Luke xvii. 26—29.—Ed.

HYMN.

Let sinners take their course,
And choose the road to death;
But in the worship of my God
I'll spend my daily breath.

Thou wilt regard my cries,
O my eternal God!
While sinners perish in surprise,
Beneath thine angry rod.

Because they dwell at ease,
And no sad changes feel,
They neither fear nor trust thy name,
Nor learn to do thy will.

But I, with all my cares,
Will lean upon the Lord;
I'll cast my burdens on his arm,
And rest upon his word.

His arm shall well sustain
The children of his love;
The ground on which their safety stands,
No earthly power can move.

WATTS.

§ CCVIII.

CHAP. XVI. 19—31.

The rich glutton and Lazarus the beggar.

¶ 19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day :

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip his finger in water, and = cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

as Zech. xiv. 12.—a Is. lxvi. 24. Mark ix. 41. &c.—o Job xxi. 13. ch. vi. 24.—p Is. viii. 20. & xxiv. 16. John v. 29. 45. Acts xv. 21. & 17. 11.—q John xii. 19. 11.

READER. *There was a certain rich man, &c.*—It is the wise man's observation, that "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them: all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath." Eccles. ix. 1, 2. The same is confirmed by the common experience of all mankind. Go where you will, you may with him also see under the sun, that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to them all," Eccles. ix. 11, and to all alike. Almighty God seemeth to scatter as it were the things of this world among the good and bad promiscuously, without any regard to virtue or vice; but that some of both sorts may get more, some less, some little or nothing, according as it happens. There is no judging of what a man is, by what he hath: you can never know a wise man from a fool, a christian from an infidel, a saint from a sinner, by his living in a palace or in a cottage,

by his being clothed with robes or with rags; by his being rich or poor, healthful or sickly, in honour or disgrace, or by any outward circumstance whatever. If there be any difference, the advantage seems mostly to lie on the side of vice and folly; the worst men having usually the most, and the best men the fewest of the good things, as they are called, here below.—BEVERIDGE.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house.—Some are so carried away by the stream of evil company, that they are possessed with hard thoughts of a godly life, by hearing them speak against it; or at least they think they may venture to do as they see most do: and so they hold on in their sinful ways. And when one is cut off and cast into hell, and another snatched away from among them to the same condemnation, it doth not much daunt them, because they see not whither they are gone. Poor wretches, they hold on in their ungodliness, for all this: for they little know that their companions are now lamenting it in torments. The rich man in hell would fain have had one to warn his five brethren, lest they should come to that place of torment. It is likely he knew their minds and lives, and knew that they were hasting thither, and little dreamt that he was there, yea, and would little have believed any one that should have told them so. I remember an occurrence that a gentleman told me he saw upon a bridge over the Severn. A man was driving a flock of fat lambs, and

something meeting them, and hindering their passage, one of the lambs leaped upon the wall of the bridge, and his legs slipping from under him, he fell into the stream: the rest seeing him, did one after another leap over the bridge into the stream, and were all, or almost all, drowned. Those that were behind did little know what was become of those that were gone before, but thought they might venture to follow their companions: but as soon as ever they were over the wall, and falling headlong, the case was altered. Even so it is with unconverted, carnal men. One dieth by them, and drops into hell, and another follows the same way: and yet they will go after them, because they think not whither they are gone. Oh, but when death hath once opened their eyes, and they see what is on the other side of the wall, even in another world, then what would they give to be where they were!—BAXTER.

And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they would repent.—If your eyes were so far opened as to see hell, and you saw your neighbours, who were unconverted, dragged thither with hideous cries, though they were such as you accounted honest people on earth, and feared no such matter by themselves; such a sight would make you go home and think of it, and think again, and make you warn all about you as the worldling in the parable would have had his brethren warned, lest they come to that place of torment. Why, faith is a kind of

sight ; it is the eye of the soul, the evidence of things not seen. If I believe God, it is next to seeing : and therefore I beseech you to excuse me, if I be half as earnest with you about these matters as if I had seen them. If I must die to-morrow, and it were in my power to come again from another world, and tell you what I had seen, would you not be willing to hear me ? and would you not believe, and regard what I should tell you ? If I might preach one sermon to you after I am dead, and have seen what is done in the world to come, would you not have me speak the truth, and would you not crowd to hear me ? and would you not lay it to heart ? But this must not be ; God hath his appointed way of teaching you by scripture and ministers ; and he will not humour unbelievers so far as to send men from the dead to them, and to alter his established way. If any man quarrel with the sun, God will not humour him so far as to set him up a clearer light. Friends, I beseech you regard me now, as you would do if I should come from the dead to you ; for I can give you as full assurance of the truth of what I say to you, as if I had been there and seen it with my eyes. For it is possible for one from the dead to deceive you ; but Jesus Christ can never deceive you ; the word of God, delivered in scripture, and sealed up by the miracles and holy workings of the Spirit, can never deceive you. Believe this, or believe nothing. Believe and obey this, or you are undone.—BAXTER.

HYMN.

When in the light of faith divine,
We look on things below,
Honour and gold, and sensual joy,
How vain and dang'rous too !

The pleasures that allure our sense,
Are dang'rous snares to souls !
There 's but a drop of flatt'ring sweet,
And dash'd with bitter bowls.

God is my all-sufficient good,
My portion and my choice ;
In him my vast desires are fill'd,
And all my pow'rs rejoice.

In vain the world accosts my ear,
And tempts my heart anew ;
I cannot buy your bliss so dear,
Nor part with heav'n for you.

WATTS.

§ CCIX.

CHAP XVII. 1—19.

Christ teacheth to avoid occasion of offence. One to forgive another. The power of faith. How we are bound to God, and not he to us. He healeth ten lepers.

THEN said he unto the disciples, " it is impossible but that offences will come : but woe unto him, through whom they come !

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 ¶ Take heed to yourselves : ' If thy brother trespass

ST. LUKE XVII. 1—19.

against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea ; and it should obey you.

7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat ?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken ; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink ?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him ? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off :

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.

16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks : and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed ? but where are the nine ?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way : thy faith hath made thee whole.

a Mat. xviii. 6, 7. Mark ix. 42. 1 Cor. xi. 19.—b Mat. xviii. 15, 21.—c Lev. xix. 17. Prov. xvii. 10. James v. 19.—d Mat. xvii. 20 ; & xxi. 21. Mark ix. 28 ; & xi. 23.—e ch. xii. 37.—f Job xxii. 8 ; & xxxv. 7. Ps. xvi. 2. Mat. xxv. 30. Rom. iii. 12 ; & xi. 35. 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17. Philemon 11.—g Luke ix. 51, 52. John iv. 4.—h Lev. xiii. 45.—i Lev. xiii. 2 ; & xiv. 2. Mat. viii. 4. ch. v. 14.—k Mat. ix. 22. Mark v. 34 ; & x. 52. ch. vii. 50 ; & viii. 48 ; & xviii. 42.

ST. LUKE XVII. 1—19.

READER. *Then met him ten men that were lepers, &c.* What a noble and irrefragable testimony was this to the power, to the truth of the Messiah! How can these Jews but either believe, or be made inexcusable in not believing? When they shall see so many lepers come at once to the temple, all cured by a secret will, without word or touch, how can they choose but say, This work is supernatural; no limited power could do this: how is he not God, if his power be infinite? Their own eyes shall be witnesses and judges of their own conviction.

The cure is done by Christ more exquisitely than by art or nature; yet it is not publicly assured and acknowledged, till, according to the Mosaical law, certain subsequent rites be performed. There is no admittance into the congregation, but by sprinkling of blood. O Saviour, we can never be assured of our cleansing from that spiritual leprosy wherewith our souls are tainted, but by the sprinkling of thy most precious blood: wash us with that, and we shall be whiter than snow. This act of showing to the priest, was not more required by the law, than pre-required of these lepers by our Saviour, for the trial of their obedience. Had they now stood upon terms with Christ, and said, "We will first see what cause there will be to show ourselves to the priests; they need not see our leprosy, we shall be glad they should see our cure; do thou work that which we shall show, and bid us show what thou hast wrought; till then excuse us; it is our grief

and shame to be seen too much;" they had been still lepers.

It hath been ever God's wont, by small precepts to prove men's dispositions. Obedience is as well tried in a trifle as in the most important charge; yea, so much more, as the thing required is less: for oft-times those who would be careful in main affairs, think they may neglect the smallest. What command soever we receive from God, or our superiors, we must not scan the weight of the thing, but the authority of the commander. Either difficulty or slightness is a vain pretence for disobedience.

These lepers are wiser: they obeyed and went. What was the issue? "As they went, they were healed." Lo! had they stood still, they had been lepers; now they went, they are whole. What haste the blessing makes to overtake their obedience! This walk was required by the very law, if they should have found themselves healed: what was it to prevent the time a little, and to do that sooner upon hopes, which upon sense they must do after? The horror of the disease adds to the grace of the cure, and that is so much more gracious as the task is easier: it shall cost them but a walk. It is the bounty of that God whom we serve, to reward our worthless endeavours with infinite requitals. He would not have any proportion betwixt our acts and his remunerations.

Yet, besides this recompence of obedience, O Saviour, thou wouldest herein have respect to thine own just glory. Had not these lepers

ST. LUKE XVII. 1—19.

been cured in the way, but in the end of their walk, upon their shewing to the priests, the miracle would have lost much light: perhaps the priests would have challenged it to themselves, and have attributed it to their prayers: perhaps the lepers might have thought it was thy purpose to honour the priests as the instruments of that marvellous cure. Now there can be no colour of any other's participation, since the leprosy vanishes in the way. As thy power, so thy praise, admits of no partners.

And now, methinks, I see what an amazed joy there was among these lepers, when they saw themselves thus suddenly cured: each tells other what a change he feels in himself; each comforts other with the assurance of his outward cleanness; each congratulates others happiness, and thinks and says, How joyful this news will be to their friends and families. Their society now serves them well to applaud and heighten their new felicity.

How sensible wert thou, O Saviour, of thine own beneficence! "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" The trooping of these lepers together did not hinder thy reckoning. It is both justice and wisdom in thee to keep a strict account of thy favours. There is a wholesome and useful art of forgetfulness in us men, both of benefits done and of wrongs offered. It is not so with God: our injuries indeed he soon puts over, making it no small part of his style that he "forgives iniquities:"—but for his mercies, there is no reason he should

forget them; they are worthy of more than our memory. His favours are universal, over all his works; there is no creature that tastes not of his bounty; his sun and rain are for others besides his friends, but none of his good turns escape either his knowledge or record. Why should not we, O God, keep a book of our receipts from thee, which, agreeing with thine, may declare thee bounteous, and us thankful?

Our Saviour doth not ask this by way of doubt, but of exprobatation. Full well did he count the steps of those absent lepers: he knew where they were; he upbraids their ingratitude, that they were not where they should have been. It was thy just quarrel, O Saviour, that while one Samaritan returned, nine Israelites were healed, and returned not. Had they been all Samaritans, this had been faulty; but now they were Israelites, their ingratitude was more foul than their leprosy. The more we are bound to God, the more shameful is our unthankfulness. There is scarce one in ten that is careful to give God his own; this neglect is not more general than displeasing. Christ had never missed their presence, if their absence had not been hateful and injurious.

—HALL.

HYMN.

O Jesus! full of truth and grace,
More full of grace than I of sin,
Yet once again I seek thy face,
In mercy look and take me in!

Thou knows't the way to bring me back,
My fallen spirit to restore;

Oh, for thy truth and mercy's sake,
 Forgive, and bid me sin no more!

The stone to flesh, O Lord! convert;
 The veil of sin once more remove:
 Sprinkle thy blood upon my heart,
 And melt it by thy dying love!

Give to mine eyes refreshing tears,
 And kindle my relatings now:
 Fill my whole soul with filial fears,
 And to thy yoke my spirit bow.

WESLEY.

§ CCX.

CHAP. XVII. 20—37.

Of the kingdom of God, and the coming of the Son of man.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not ¹ with observation:

21 ¹Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo there! for behold, ²the kingdom of God is ¹within you.

22 And he said unto the disciples, ²The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see *it*.

23 ²And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.

24 ²For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one

598

part under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

25 ²But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

26 ²And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 ²Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But ¹the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man ²is revealed.

31 In that day, ²he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 ²Remember Lot's wife.

33 ²Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and

whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

34 ^a I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other left.

35 Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left.

36 ^b Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they answered and said unto him, ^c Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Where-soever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

¹ Or, with outward shear.—*l* ver. 23.—*m* Rom. xiv. 17. —² Or, among you. John i. 26.—³ See Mat. ix. 15. John xvii. 12.—⁴ Mat. xxiv. 23. Mark xiii. 21. ch. xxi. 8.—⁵ Mat. xxiv. 27.—⁶ Mark viii. 31. & ix. 21. & x. 33. ch. ix. 22.—⁷ Gen. vii. Mat. xxiv. 37.—⁸ Gen. xix.—⁹ Gen. xix. 16, 24.—¹⁰ 2 Thes. i. 7.—¹¹ Mat. xxiv. 17. Mark viii. 15.—¹² Gen. xix. 24.—¹³ Mat. x. 39. & xvi. 26. Mark viii. 35. ch. ix. 24. John xii. 25.—¹⁴ Mat. xxiv. 40, 41. 1 Thes. iv. 17.—¹⁵ This 26th verse is wanting in most of the Greek copies.— & Job. xxxix. 30. Mat. xxiv. 23.

See § LXXVIII.

Matthew XXVI. 34—51.

§ CCXI.

CHAP. XVIII. 1—14.

Of the importunate widow. Of the Pharisee and Publican.

AND he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought ^a always to pray and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was ^b in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 ^c Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 ^d And shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you ^e that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake this parable unto certain ^f which trusted in themselves ^g that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee ^h stood and prayed thus with himself, ⁱ God, I thank thee that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners,

unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other, ^a for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

a ch. xi. 5; & xxi. 26. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18 Col. iv. 2. 1 Thess. v. 17.—† Gr. in a certain city—δ ch. xi. 8.—c Rev. vi. 10.—d Heb. x. 37. 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.—e ch. x. 29; & xvi. 15.—f Or, as being righteous—g Ps. cxxxv. 2.—g Is. l. 15; & lviii. 2. Rev. iii. 17.—h Job xxii. 29. Mat. xxiii. 12. ch. xiv. 11. James iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5, 6.

READER.—*And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*—Probably with a view to encourage his disciples under the prospect of their approaching difficulties, Jesus exhorted them to pray, and to urge their requests with unceasing ardour. Let us attend to his counsel: “Men ought ALWAYS to pray,” at all times, and in all the various circumstances of life. Though many difficulties attend the practice of the duty, and our petitions seem to be rejected, we are “not to faint.” Our fears may suggest that “God hath forgotten to be gracious,” and that it were vain to hope for his mercy; yet we are here taught to renew our applica-

tions with fresh vigour, and to “give him no rest” till he vouchsafe to grant us deliverance and comfort.

The efficacy of such continued fervour in our addresses to God is exhibited in a short parable. A poor distressed widow, under great oppression, earnestly solicited the interference of a magistrate in her behalf, that she might obtain justice. He being destitute of every good principle both toward God and man, refused for some time to undertake her cause; but at length he consented, merely that he might be freed from the trouble of her importunity. Jesus has directed us to draw the proper conclusion from this little history. The Lord God may seem regardless of the incessant cries of his afflicted people for a considerable season: but still they should persevere in their ardent supplications, and expect his gracious interposition. Like holy Jacob, they should wrestle with him, and say, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” Then will he rescue them from the oppression of their spiritual enemies, and satisfy the desires of their souls. Yet, great as this encouragement is, how few are animated by it! Do not some appear so disheartened, and so “faint in their minds,” as to grow remiss and almost abandon their hope? Thus Jesus lamented, that upon his coming, he should find but little faith on the earth. And should this be the day of his visitation among ourselves, we fear that the number of firm and lively believers would be proved to be small indeed. Ah! why do we distrust

ST. LUKE XVIII. 1—14.

his promise? Or, if we maintain our dependence upon it, why do we give way to so many distressing apprehensions? Why are we so backward to the duty of prayer; so cold and languid in the performance? Surely we treat the Lord as if we thought that he could not be true to his word.

Another parable, addressed to those who boasted of their own goodness and looked down with contempt upon others, instructs us with what temper of mind we should make our approaches to God. We may draw near with confidence, in reliance on the Saviour; but not with presumption, as if we had a claim upon him, on the ground of our own merit. We are taught to bow before him with the deepest humiliation and abhorrence of ourselves, confessing our iniquity, and imploring forgiveness through his free and abundant mercy, as revealed in the gospel. This is represented in the case of two men, a Pharisee, and a Publican, who went to worship at the temple. Their principles and dispositions were widely different; and very different also was the effect of their prayers.

The Pharisee stood by himself, with much self-sufficiency, as if he should be polluted by coming near the publican. His devotions, if such they may be called, contained not one petition; and though he pretended to thank God, his object was to compliment himself, while he described his own excellency, and recounted the various services he had performed. He alleged that he was far better than the generality of

mankind; that he had avoided the gross sins in which many others lived, and which might be charged upon the notorious character then present; and that he had also been exact in all ceremonial observances. Such was the detail of his goodness, such the only foundation of his hope towards God. And was not this "sacrifice an abomination unto the Lord?" Yes, a proud spirit is peculiarly odious to him; and he hath determined "that no flesh shall glory in his presence." But are not many, under a Christian profession, worshipping with the temper of the Jewish Pharisee? Let his prayer be translated into modern language, and it would describe precisely the sentiments of numbers among us. We have many who compare themselves with others, who boast of their virtue, their freedom from scandalous crimes, and their strict performance of certain customary rites. But what shall we say? Shall we not remark, as before, that, so long as they exalt themselves, their most specious offerings, whether of charity or of devotion, are offensive to God?

Another character, however, is here exhibited, and that of an acceptable worshipper. The publican, or Roman tax-gatherer, whose former life it is probable had been stained with many enormities, was compelled, under the terror of an awakened conscience, to humble himself in the presence of God, and to deprecate his vengeance. He stood at a distance from the sanctuary, and with eyes cast down upon the ground; thus expressing his unworthiness to draw near or look

up to God. Nor was such demeanour the only evidence of his feelings. Smiting upon his breast, through extreme anguish for his accumulated guilt, and confessing himself a sinner obnoxious to justice, without offering any plea in his own favour, he prayed that, if it were possible, God would extend his mercy to him. To such a contrite penitent as this, however flagitious his conduct may have been, the promises of the gospel are addressed. "Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." This the publican found; he went down to his house in peace, having obtained acceptance with God. How instructive, how animating is the example! It is recorded for our encouragement; and the declaration is added, to revive the heart of all who are ready to despond, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—For this abundant grace, indeed, we are indebted to Him who "died for the ungodly," and whose "blood cleanseth from all sin." Our application to God must be made in his name, and in dependence on his merits. But even the interposition of Christ will not avail us, unless we feel that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance," and that deep humiliation which the publican expressed. We may have been preserved from gross offences; but if we be truly sensible of our guilt, we shall not be unwilling to be considered on a level with the worst of characters, in the point of our acceptance with God, nor will any other prayer suit us so well as that which is here provided,

"God be merciful to me a sinner!"—
ROBINSON.

HYMN.

Behold the throne of grace!
The promise calls me near;
There Jesus shows a smiling face,
And waits to answer prayer.

That rich atoning blood,
Which sprinkled round I see,
Provides, for those who come to God,
An all-prevailing plea.

Beyond our utmost wants
His love and power can bless;
To praying souls he always grants
More than they can express.

Thine image, Lord, bestow,
Thy presence and thy love;
I ask to serve Thee here below,
And reign with Thee above.

Teach me to live by faith,
Conform my will to thine;
Let me victorious be in death,
And then in glory shine.

NEWTON.

§ CCXII.

CHAP. XVIII. 15—30.

A ruler that would follow Christ, but is hindered by his riches. The reward of them that leave all for his sake.

15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and

forbid them not : for ^a of such is the kingdom of God.

17 'Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

18 ^a And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good ? none is good, save one, *that is*, God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, ^a Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing : 'sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful : for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !

25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved ?

27 And he said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

28 'Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, 'There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 ^a Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

^a Mat. xix. 13. Mark x. 13.—^b 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 2.—^c Mark x. 15.—^d Mat. xix. 16. Mark x. 17.—^e Ex. xx. 12, 15. Deut. v. 16—20. Rom. xiii. 9.—^f Eph. vi. 2. Col. iii. 20.—^g Mat. vi. 19, 20; and xix. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 19.—^h Prov. xi. 23. Mat. xix. 23. Mark x. 23.—ⁱ Jer. xxxii. 17. Zech. viii. 6. Mat. xix. 26. ch. i. 37.—^j Mat. xix. 27.—^k Deut. xxiii. 9.—^l Job xlii. 10.

See § § LXI. LXII.

Matthew XIX. 13—30.

§ CCXIII.

CHAP. XVIII. 31—43.

Christ forshoweth his death ; and restoreth the blind man to his sight.

31 ¶ 'Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them,

ST. LUKE XIX. 1—10.

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on :

33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death : and the third day he shall rise again.

34 And they understood none of these things : and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

35 ¶ And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging :

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38 And he cried saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace : but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought

unto him : and when he was come near, he asked him,

41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight : thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God : and all the people, when then they saw it, gave praise unto God.

¶ Mat. xvi. 21. & xvii. 22. & xx. 17. Mark x. 32.—¶ Ps. xxii. 18. illi.—s Mat. xxvii. 2. ch. xxiii. John xviii. 28. Acts iii. 18.—s Mark ix. 32. ch. ii. 50 ; & ix. 4. Job x. 6. & xii. 16.—s Mat. xx. 29 ; Mark x. 48.—s ch. xvii. 19.—d ch. v. 26. Acts iv. 31 ; & xi. 18.

See Commentary on Matthew XX, 17—19. in § LXIV.

See also § LXV.

Matthew XX. 29—34.

§ CCXIV.

CHAP. XIX. 1—10.

Of Zacchæus a Publican.

AND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see

ST. LUKE XIX. 1—10

Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide in thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, "That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

named Zacchæus, &c. The city of Jericho had been formerly rendered famous by the remarkable triumph which Joshua there obtained. In this same spot the Lord Jesus triumphed by his grace, and erected a trophy in proof of his victory over Satan. He had already manifested his high character, in the confines of the town, by giving sight to the blind: but a more illustrious instance of his power and mercy is now to be exhibited in the conversion of a notorious sinner. Let us "praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." How many witnesses declare that He is "mighty to save." Every fresh example encourages our application to him and dependence upon him. May His Spirit work effectually in us, that, while we contemplate his free and extensive kindness to others, we also may partake of his great salvation. As Jesus passed through Jericho, he was attended by an immense concourse of people. Perhaps, also, the miracle which he wrought there added to his train. One of this numerous company is selected for our peculiar notice; and his case is considered by the sacred historian as so interesting, that it is introduced with a mark of admiration. "Behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich." By his rank in life, as principal of the tax-gatherers, having many collectors under him, he possessed no small influence, and had raised an ample fortune. A situation this, most unfavourable to

^a Mat. ix. 11. ch. v. 30.—^b ch. iii. 14.—^c Ex. xxii. 1. 1 Sam. xli. 3. 2 Sam. xii. 6.—^d Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16. Gal. iii. 7.—^e ch. xiii. 16.—^f Mat. xviii. 11. See Mat. x. 6; & xv. 24.

READER. Behold, there was a man

religion! Power and wealth are great hindrances in the way of salvation: those who are most exalted in the world seem the furthest removed from the very means of conversion. They are, as it were, fenced round with strong barriers, which prevent an access to their hearts. When such persons, therefore, become "obedient to the faith," the hand of the Lord is illustriously displayed in the change. His grace is effectual to surmount all difficulties; when he is pleased to work, none shall let it: "even the rich among the people shall entreat his favour." Psalm xlv. 12.

But Zacchæus had also been a man of base character, and iniquitous conduct, covetous, unjust, and oppressive. And some may be ready to ask, Can such an one obtain mercy? Or is it probable that Jesus should ever look with a favourable regard upon him? Yes: the very man before us is singled out as a monument of his mercy, in order to show that he can pardon, sanctify, and save the chief of sinners.

Zacchæus, it should seem, sought not for any acquaintance with Jesus, but, probably, was induced by mere curiosity to mix with the multitude, that he might gain sight of the remarkable person of whom he had heard so much. But, not being able to gratify his wishes, on account of the crowd and his own diminutive size, he mounted up into a tree by the side of the road, that he might have a distinct view. Jesus observed him, and called to him by name, desiring him to come down, and ex-

pressing an intention of being his guest. Thus our Lord was the first to propose the visit: and by this unsolicited favour, he "prevented him with the blessings of goodness."

We rejoice when the careless and profane are brought by any motive to attend, where Jesus vouchsafes his presence. Very frequently they obtain those benefits which they never coveted or sought. Various inducements may lead them to the place, where the divine ordinances are administered, and the truth of the gospel is faithfully declared; such as general custom, habits of education, the solicitations of others, some strange reports about the preacher or the doctrine, and an inquisitive desire to know what can attract so large a concourse of people. Now, however weak or wrong these reasons may be, we would still encourage them to come and show themselves, where the Saviour passeth by. Perhaps he may unexpectedly look upon them, and reveal himself to them, as he did to Zacchæus. Thus, in many cases, repentance, faith, and love, have been suddenly produced under those means which were first resorted to through an idle curiosity. They who meant to be mere spectators, or captious critics, have found themselves deeply interested: their hearts have been instantly impressed and changed, so that they have departed with sentiments and dispositions very different from those which they brought with them. Jesus beholds them with compassion, and, even before they offer up a prayer to him, speaks effectually to their con-

ST. LUKE XIX. 1—10.

sciences, and attaches them inseparably to himself. In the conversion of every sinner the unmerited grace of God is gloriously displayed: but in these instances more especially it appears at once that "boasting is excluded;" and that their love to the Saviour is properly the fruit of his love to them; "that they have not chosen him, but he hath chosen them." John xv. 16.

The call was no sooner given to Zacchæus than it was cheerfully obeyed; and it is of importance to remark the astonishing alteration which he immediately discovered. The effect, however, must be ascribed not only to the word of Christ, but to the divine Spirit, which rendered the word so powerful. With eager haste the rich publican came down from the tree, where he had taken his place, and received his illustrious guest with impressions of lively joy. He could not but be surprised to hear a perfect stranger to him, as he might conceive, addressing him by name, and proposing to abide at his house: but it is evident that he instantly felt a conviction of the high dignity of the Personage before him, and considered the offer as an act of gracious condescension. His heart, therefore, being first opened, he was glad to admit the divine visitant within his doors, and thought himself honoured by his presence.

Is this the reception which the Saviour meets with among ourselves? How few yield a ready obedience to his word! "He hath called, but we refused: He hath stretched out his hand, and no man regarded." Prov.

i. 24. Is there, even with you, who profess an attention to his gospel, any thing like that affectionate attachment to him which Zacchæus showed? Would you consent that he should abide with you; and would you rejoice to furnish an entertainment for him? He is, indeed, removed from the earth; but you have many of his representatives around you, and you are required to evince your love for Him by your kindness to them. Do you, then, search out his poor members, that you may minister to their necessities? Do you embrace every opportunity of relieving them? And are you thankful for the exalted privilege? This fruit of divine grace we observe in Zacchæus. While he made a public confession of his former wickedness before Jesus and all the company, he wished to testify the sincerity of his repentance. He, whose grand object had been to amass worldly treasures, was no sooner acquainted with the Saviour, than he expressed a willingness to give up a large share of his wealth for the support of the indigent. He declared his determination to consecrate his substance to the Lord, by devoting even the half of it to charitable purposes. The same extensive distribution, according to that exact division of our property, is not binding upon us. But we are strangers to the love of Christ, if we shut up our bowels of compassion from the afflicted, nay, if we do not "open our hand wide unto them," as God hath prospered us. Ah! how many warm advocates for the gospel betray their insin-

ST. LUKE XIX. 11—27.

cerity by "having a heart exercised with covetous practices!" 2 Peter ii. 14.—ROBINSON.

HYMN.

Father of Heaven, Almighty King,
How wondrous is thy love,
That worms of dust thy praise should sing,
And thou their songs approve.

Since by a new and living way
Access to Thee is given,
Poor sinners may with boldness pray,
And earth converse with heaven.

Give each some token, Lord, for good ;
And send the Spirit down
To feed us with celestial food,
The body of thy Son.

The feast Thou hast been pleased to make
We would by faith receive ;
That all that come their part may take,
And all that take may live.

Let ev'ry tongue the Father own,
Who, when we all were lost,
To seek and save us sent the Son,
And gives the Holy Ghost.

HART.

§ CCXV.

CHAP. XIX. 11—27.

The ten pieces of money.

11 AND as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 ^a He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

608

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 'But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the ^t money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant : because thou hast been ^a faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.

21 'For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, = Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. * Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow :

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury ?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, ° That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

g Acts i. 6.—h Mat. xxv. 14. Mark xiii. 34.—|| *Mina*, here translated a pound, is twelve ounces and a half; which according to five shillings the ounce is three pounds two shillings and sixpence.—i John i. 11.—† *Gr. silver*, and so ver. 23.—k Mat. xxv. 21. ch. xvi. 10.—l Mat. xxv. 24.—m 2 Sam. i. 16. Job xv. 6. Mat. xii. 37.—n Mat. xxv. 26.—o Mat. xiii. 12; & xxv. 20. Mark iv. 25. ch. viii. 18.

See § LXXX.

Matthew XXV. 14—30.

§ CCXVI.

CHAP XIX. 28—48.

Christ rideth into Jerusalem with triumph; weepeth over it; driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple; teaching daily in it. The rulers would have destroyed him, but for fear of the people.

28 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, ° he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29 ° And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you*; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him hither*.

31 And if any man ask you Why do ye loose *him*? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosening the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt ?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to

Jesus: 'and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36 'And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen ;

38 Saying, 'Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord : " peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, ' the stones would immediately cry out.

41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and ' wept over it,

42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall ' cast a trench about thee,

and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.

44 And ' shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and ' they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another ; ' because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

45 ' And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought ;

46 Saying unto them, ' It is written, My house is the house of prayer : but ' ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 And he taught daily in the temple. But ' the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48 And could not find what they might do : for all the people ' were very attentive to hear him.

¶ Mark x. 32.—q Mat. xxi. 1. Mark xi. 1.—r 2 Kin. ix. 15. Mat. xxi. 7. Mark xi. 7. John xii. 14.—s Mat. xxi. 8.—t Ps. cxviii. 26. ch. xiii. 35.—u ch. ii. 14. Eph. ii. 14.—v Hab. ii. 11.—w John xi. 35.—x Is. xxix. 3, 4. Jer. vi. 3, 6. ch. xxi. 23.—y 1 Kin. ix. 7, 8. Mic. iii. 12.—z Mat. xxiv. 2. Mark xiii. 2. ch. xxi. 6.—a Dan. ix. 24. ch. i. 63, 78. 1 Pet. ii. 12.—b Mat. xxi. 12. Mark xi. 11, 15. John ii. 14, 18.—c 1a. lvi. 7.—d Jer. vii. 11.—e Mark xi. 18. John vii. 19 ; & viii. 37.—f Or, Arranged on Him. Acts xvi. 14.

See § § LXVI. LXVII.

Matthew XXI. 1—17.

And § LXXV.

Matthew XXIII. 34—39.

§ CCXVII.

CHAP. XX. 1—18.

Christ avoucheth his authority by a question of John's baptism. The parable of the vineyard.

AND 'it came to pass, *that* on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon *him* with the elders,

2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, ' by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he who gave thee this authority?

3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

6 But and if we say, Of men, all the people will stone us: 'for they be persuaded that John was a Prophet.

7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence *it was*.

8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; 'A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty.

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast *him* out.

13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence *him* when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be our's.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to

others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

a Mat. xxi. 28.—b Acts vi. 7; & vii. 27.—c Mat. xiv. 5; & xx; 26. ch. vii. 29.—d Mat. xxi. 33.—Mark xii. 1. e Ps. cxviii. 22. Mat. xxi. 42.—f Dan. ii. 34, 35. Mat. xxi. 44.

See §§ LXVIII. LXIX.

Matthew XXI. 23—27, and 33—46.

§ CCXVIII.

CHAP. XX. 19—47.

Of giving tribute to Cæsar. Christ convinceth the Sadducees that denied the resurrection. How Christ is the Son of David. He warneth his disciples to beware of the scribes.

19 ¶ And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 ¶ And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which

should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:

22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?

23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

24 Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's.

25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 ¶ Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

28 Saying, master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife,

and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died.

32 Last of all the woman died also.

33 Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

34 Then Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and

the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

39 ¶ Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

40 And after that they durst not ask him any *question at all*.

41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?

42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then hisson?

45 ¶ Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

¶ Mat. xxii. 16.—A Mat. xxii. 16. Mark xii. 14.—¶ Or of a truth.—¶ See Mat. xviii. 28.—¶ Mat. xxii. 23. Mark xii. 18.—A Acts xxiii. 6, 8.—¶ Deut. xv. 5.—¶ 1 Cor. xv. 42, 49, 52. 1 John iii. 2.—¶ Rom. viii. 23.—¶ Ex. iii. 6.—¶ Rom. vi. 10, 11.—¶ Mat. xxii. 42. Mark xii. 35.—¶ Ps. cx. 1. Acts. ii. 34.—¶ Mat. xxiii. 1. Mark xii. 38. ¶ Mat. xxiii. 5.—¶ ch. xi. 43.—¶ Mat. xxiii. 14.

See § § § LXXI. LXXII. LXXIII.
 Matthew XXII. 15—33, 41—46.
 And XXIII. 1—12.

§ CCXIX.

CHAP. XXI. 1—24.

*Christ commendeth the poor widow.
 He foretelleth the destruction of the temple
 and of the city Jerusalem.*

AND he looked up, *and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two 'mites.

3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, 'that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all :

4 For all these have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God : but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

5 ¶ 'And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

6 *As for* these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which 'there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

614

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be ? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to pass ?

8 And he said, *take heed that ye be not deceived : for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ* ; 'and the time draweth near : go ye not therefore after them.

9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified : for these things must first come to pass ; but the end *is* not by and by.

10 'Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom :

11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences ; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

12 'But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and 'into prisons, 'being brought before kings and rulers 'for my name's sake.

13 And 'it shall turn to you for a testimony.

14 "Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer :

15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, "which all

your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

16 * And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends ; and ^p *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17 And ^r ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake.

18 ' But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

20 ' And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains ; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out ; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 For these be the days of vengeance, that ' all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 * But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days ! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, ^r until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

^a Mark xii. 41.—^b See Mark xii. 42.—^c 2 Cor. viii. 12.—^d Mat. xxiv. 1. Mark xiii. 1.—^e ch. xix. 44.—^f Mat. xxiv. 4. Mark xiii. 5. Eph. v. 6. 2 Thea. ii. 5.—^g Or, *and, The time.* Mat. iii. 2; & iv. 17.—^h Mat. xxiv. 7.—ⁱ Mark xiii. 9. Rev. ii. 10.—^k Acts iv. 5; & v. 18; & xii. 4; & xvi. 24.—^l Acts xxv. 28.—^m 1 Pet. ii. 13.—ⁿ Phil. i. 28. 2 Thea. i. 5.—^o Mat. x. 19. Mark xiii. 11. ch. xii. 11. ^p Acts vi. 10.—^q Mic. vii. 3. Mark xiii. 12.—^r Acts vii. 59; & xii. 2.—^s Mat. x. 22.—^t Mat. x. 30.—^u Mat. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14.—^v Dan. ix. 26, 27. Zech. xi. 1.—^w Mat. xxiv. 19.—^x Dan. ix. 27; & xii. 7.

READER.—*And he looked up, &c.*—Thine eye, O Lord, is piercing and retributive. As to see thee is perfect happiness, so to be seen of thee is true contentment and glory.

And dost thou, O God, see what we give thee, and not see what we take away from thee? Are our offerings more noted than our sacrileges? Surely, thy mercy is not more quicksighted than thy justice. In both kinds our actions are viewed, our account is kept; and we are as sure to receive rewards for what we have given, as vengeance for what we have defaulted. With thine eye of knowledge thou seest all we do; but what we do well, thou seest with an eye of approbation. So didst thou now behold these pious and charitable oblations. How well wert thou pleased with this variety! Thou sawest many rich men give much, and one poor widow give more than they in lesser room.

The Jews were now under the Roman pressure: they were all tributaries, yet many of them rich, and and those rich men were liberal to the common chest. Hadst thou seen those many rich give little, we had heard of thy censure; thou expectest a proportion betwixt the giver and the gift, betwixt the gift and the receipt; where that fails, the blame is just. That nation, though otherwise faulty

enough, was in this commendable. How bounteously open were their hands to the house of God! Time was when their liberality was fain to be restrained by proclamation; and now it needed no incitement; the rich gave much, the poorest gave more: "He saw a poor widow casting in two mites." It was misery enough that she was a widow. The married woman is under the careful provision of a husband; if she spend, he earns: in that estate four hands work for her; in her widowhood, but two. Poverty added to the sorrow of her widowhood. The loss of some husbands is supplied by a rich jointure: it is some allay to the grief that the hand be full though the bed be empty. This woman was not more desolate than needy; yet this poor widow gives; and what gives she? an offering like herself,— "two mites;"—or, in our language, two half-farthing tokens. Alas! good woman, who was poorer than thyself? Wherefore was that corban but for the relief of such as thou? Who should receive if such give? Thy mites were something to thee, nothing to the Treasury. How ill is that gift bestowed, which disfurnisheth thee, and adds nothing to the common stock! Some thrifty neighbour might, perhaps, have suggested this probable discouragement. Jesus publishes and applauds her bounty: "He called his disciples and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, this woman hath cast in more than they all." While the rich put in their offerings, I see no disciples called; it was enough that

Christ noted their gifts alone; but when the widow comes with her two mites, now the domestics of Christ are summoned to assemble, and taught to admire this munificence; a solemn preface makes way to her praise, and her mites are made more precious than the other's talents: "She gave more than they all;" more, not only in respect of the mind of the giver, but of the proportion of the gift as hers. A mite to her was more than pounds to them: pounds were little to them, two mites were all to her; they gave out of their abundance, she out of her necessity. That which they gave left the heap less, yet a heap still; she gives all at once, and leaves herself nothing. So, as she gave not more than any, but "more than they all." God doth not so much regard what is taken out as what is left. O Father of mercies! thou lookest at once into the bottom of her heart and the bottom of her purse, and esteemest her gift according to both. As thou seest not as man, so thou valuest not as man: man judgeth by the worth of the gift, thou judgest by the mind of the giver, and the proportion of the remainder. It were wide with us, if thou shouldest go by quantities. Alas! what have we but mites, and those of thine own lending? It is the comfort of our meanness that our affections are valued, and not our presents: neither hast thou said, "God loves a liberal giver, but a cheerful." If I had more, O God, thou shouldest have it; had I less thou wouldest not despise it, who "acceptest the gift according to that

a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Yea, Lord, what have I but two mites, a soul, and a body? mere mites, yea, not so much, to thine infiniteness. O that I could perfectly offer them up unto thee, according to thine own right in them, and not according to mine. How graciously wouldst thou be sure to accept them! How happy shall I be in thine acceptance!—HALL.

HYMN.

Remember, man, thy birth,
Set not on gold thy heart,
Naked thou cam'st upon the earth,
And naked must depart.

This world's vain wealth despise,
Happiness is not here:
To Jesus lift thy longing eyes,
And seek thy treasure there.

Be wise to run thy race,
And cast off ev'ry load,
Strive to be rich in works of grace,
Be rich toward thy God.

The poor may thus be rich,
Their means however small:
When rich men once gave very much,
Two mites exceeded all.

If profit be thy scope,
Diffuse thine alms about;
The worldling prospers laying up,
The Christian laying out.

Returns will not be scant,
With honour in the highest;
For who relieves his brother's want,
Bestows his alms on Christ.

Give gladly to the poor,
'Tis lending to the Lord;
In secret to increase thy store,
And hide in heaven thy hoard.

There thou may'st fear no thief,
No rankling rust, no moth;
Thy treasure and thy heart are safe
Where one is, will be both.

HART.

§ CCXX.

CHAP. XXI. 25—38.

The signs which shall be before the last day. Christ exhorteth his disciples to be watchful.

25 ¶ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

33 'Heaven and earth shall pass away : but my words shall not pass away.

34 ¶ And 'take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For / as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 'Watch ye therefore, and 'pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and 'to stand before the Son of man.

37 'And in the day time he was teaching in the temple ; and 'at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

y Mat. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 24. 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12.—z Mat. xxiv. 29.—a Mat. xxiv. 30. Rev. i 7 ; & xiv. 14.—b Rom. viii. 19, 23.—c Mat. xxiv. 32. Mark xiii. 28.—d Mat. xxiv. 35.—e Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Thes. v. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 7.—f 1 Thes. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3 ; & xvi. 15.—g Mat. xxiv. 42 ; & xxv. 13. Mark xiii. 35.—h ch. xviii. 1.—i Ps. l. v. Eph. vi. 13.—j John viii. 1, 2.—k ch. xvii. 30.

See § § LXXVII. LXXVIII.

Matthew XXIV. 29—42.

§ CCXXI.

CHAP. XXII. 1—23.

The Jews conspire against Christ. Satan prepareth Judas to betray him. The Apostles prepare the passover. Christ instituteth his holy Supper ; and covertly foretelleth of the traitor.

Now* the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover.

2 And 'the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him ; for they feared the people.

3 ¶ 'Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, and 'covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them 'in the absence of the multitude.

7 ¶ 'Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And he said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 ^f And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, ¹ With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, ^g until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves:

18 For ^h I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of

the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 ¶ ⁱ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; ^a this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 ¶ ^m But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table.

22 ⁿ And truly the Son of man goeth, ^o as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23 ^p And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

^a Mat. xxvi. 2. Mark xiv. 1.—^b Ps. ii. 2. John xi. 47. Acts iv. 47.—^c Mat. xxvi. 14. Mark xiv. 10. John xiii. 2, 27.—^d Zech. xi. 12.—^e Or, *without tumult*.—^f Mat. xxvi. 17. Mark xiv. 12.—^g Mat. xxvi. 20. Mark xiv. 17.—^h Or, *I have heartily desired*.—ⁱ ch. xiv. 15. Acts x. 41. Rev. xix. 9.—^j Mat. xxvi. 29. Mark xiv. 25.—^k Mat. xxvi. 26. Mark xiv. 22.—^l 1 Cor. xi. 24.—^m 1 Cor. x. 16.—ⁿ Ps. xli. 9. Mat. xxvi. 21, 22. Mark xiv. 18. John xiii. 21, 26.—^o Mat. xxvi. 24.—^p Acts ii. 20; & iv. 28.—^q Mat. xxvi. 22. John xiii. 22, 25.

See § § LXXXII. LXXXIII.

Matthew XXVI. 1—5; 14—28.

§ CCXXII.

CHAP. XXII. 24—38.

Christ dehortheth his Apostles from ambition; assureth Peter his faith should

not fail; and yet he should deny him thrice.

24 ¶ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:

and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

g Mark ix. 34. ch. ix. 46.—f Mat. xx. 25. Mark i. 42.—e Mat. xx. 26. 1 Pet. v. 3.—d ch. ix. 48.—c ch. xii. 27.—b Mat. xx. 28. John xiii. 13, 14. Phil. ii. 7.—g Heb. iv. 15.—h Mat. xxiv. 47. ch. xii. 32. 2 Cor. i. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 12.—i Mat. viii. 11. ch. xiv. 15. Rev. xxi. 9.—j Ps. xlix. 14. Mat. xix. 26. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Rev. iii. 21.—k 1 Pet. v. 8.—l Amos ix. 9.—m John xvii. 9, 11, 15.—n Ps. ii. 13. John xxi. 16, 17.—o Mat. xxvi. 34. Mark xiv. 30. John xiii. 36.—p Mat. x. 9. ch. ix. 8; & x. 4.—q Is. liii. 12. Mark xv. 28.

READER.—*The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, &c.* See § LXIV. Matthew XX. 25—28.

Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, &c. See § LXXXIII. Matthew XXVI. 33—35.

This that is written must yet be accomplished in me, &c. See Commentary on Matthew XVI. 21, in § LV; and on ch. XXIV. 27, in § CCXXXI, below.

§ CCXXXIII.

CHAP. XXII. 39—53.

Christ prayeth in the mount, and sweateth blood. He is betrayed with a kiss. He healeth Malchus' ear.

39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

40 * And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 * And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and

his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray lest ye enter into temptation.

47 ¶ And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 When they which were about saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50 ¶ And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 * Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched

forth no hands against me : ' but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

† Mat. xxvi. 36. Mark xiv. 32. John xviii. 1.—† ch. xxi. 37.—m Mat. vi. 13; & xxvi. 41. Mark xiv. 38. ver. 48.—n Mat. xxvi. 39. Mark xiv. 38.—† Gr. *waiting to remove*.—o John v. 30; & vi. 38.—p Mat. iv. 11.—q John xii. 27. Heb. v. 7.—r ver. 40.—s Mat. xxvi. 47. Mark xiv. 43. John xviii. 3.—t Mat. xxvi. 51. Mark xiv. 47. John xviii. 10.—u Mat. xxvi. 55. Mark xiv. 48.—x John xii. 27.

See § § LXXXIV. LXXXV.

Matthew XXVI. 36—56.

§ CCXXIV.

CHAP. XXII. 54—71.

Christ is denied of Peter ; shamefully abused ; and confesseth himself to be the Son of God.

54 ¶ ' Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest's house. 'And Peter followed afar off.

55 ' And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sat down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 ' And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 ' And about the space

of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him : for he is a Galilæan.

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. ' And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him; ' Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

63 ¶ ' And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote *him*.

64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee ?

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

66 ¶ ' And as soon as it was day, ' the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

67 ' Art thou the Christ ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe :

68 And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *mego*.

69 ' Hereafter shall the Son

ST. LUKE XXIII. 1—12.

of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, 'Ye say that I am.

71 " And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

g Mat. xxvi. 67.—s Mat. xxvi. 68. John xviii. 15.—
e Mat. xxvi. 69. Mark xiv. 66. John xviii. 17, 18.—
d Mat. xxvi. 71. Mark xiv. 69. John xviii. 25.—c Mat.
xxvi. 73. Mark xiv. 70. John xviii. 26.—d Mat. xxvi.
75. Mark xiv. 72.—e Mat. xxvi. 84, 76. John xiii. 38.—
f Mat. xxvi. 67, 68. Mark xiv. 65.—g Mat. xxvii. 1.—
h Acts iv. 28. See Acts xxii. 5.—i Mat. xxvi. 63. Mark
xiv. 61.—j Mat. xxvi. 64. Mark xiv. 62. Heb. i. 8; & viii.
1.—k Mat. xxvi. 64. Mark xiv. 62.—m Mat. xxvi. 65.
Mark xiv. 63.

See § § LXXXVI. LXXXVII.

Matthew XXVI. 57—75.

§ CCXXV.

CHAP. XXIII. 1—12.

Jesus is accused before Pilate and sent to Herod. Herod mocketh him. Herod and Pilate are made friends.

AND " the whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate.

2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fel-
low* ^b perverting the nation, and
forbidding to give tribute to
Cæsar, saying " that he himself
is Christ a king.

3 " And Pilate asked him, say-
ing, Art thou the King of the
Jews? And he answered him
and said, Thou sayest *it*.

4 Then said Pilate to the chief

priests and *to* the people, ' I find
no fault in this man.

5 And they were the more
fierce, saying, He stirreth up the
people, teaching throughout all
Jewry, beginning from Galilee
to this place.

6 When Pilate heard of Gali-
lee, he asked whether the man
were a Galilæan.

7 And as soon as he knew
that he belonged unto " Herod's
jurisdiction, he sent him to
Herod, who himself also was at
Jerusalem at that time.

8 ¶ And when Herod saw
Jesus, he was exceeding glad:
for ^a he was desirous to see him
of a long *season*, because ' he
had heard many things of him;
and he hoped to have seen
some miracle done by him.

9 Then he questioned with
him in many words; but he
answered him nothing.

10 And the chief priests and
scribes stood and vehemently
accused him.

11 ^a And Herod with his men
of war set him at nought, and
mocked *him*, and arrayed him
in a gorgeous robe, and sent
him again to Pilate.

12 ¶ And the same day
' Pilate and Herod were made
friends together: for before
they were at enmity between
themselves.

ST. LUKE XXIII. 1—12.

a Mat. xviii. 2. Mark xv. 1. John xviii. 28.—*b* Acts xvii. 7.—*c* See Mat. xvii. 27; & xxii. 21. Mark xii. 17.—*d* John xix. 12.—*e* Mat. xxvii. 11. 1 Tim. vi. 13.—*f* 1 Pet. ii. 22.—*g* ch. lii. 1.—*h* ch. xi. 9.—*i* Mat. xiv. 1. Mark vi. 14.—*k* Is. liii. 8.—*l* Acts iv. 27.

READER.—*Pilate asked him saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.*—He, that was no less wisdom than truth, thought it not best either to affirm or deny at once. Sometimes it may be extremely prejudicial to speak all truths. To disclaim that title suddenly, which had been of old given him by the prophets, at his birth by the Eastern sages, and now lately at his procession by the acclaiming multitude, had been injurious to himself; to profess and challenge it absolutely, had been unsafe, and needlessly provoking. By wise and just degrees, therefore, doth he so far affirm this truth, that he both satisfies the inquirer, and takes off all peril and prejudice from his assertion. Pilate shall know him a king, but such a king, as no king needs to fear, as all kings ought to acknowledge and adore: "My kingdom is not of this world." It is your mistaking, O ye earthly potentates, that is guilty of your fears. Herod hears of a king born, and is troubled; Pilate hears of a king of the Jews, and is incensed. Were ye not ignorant, ye could not be jealous; had ye learned to distinguish of kingdoms these suspicions would vanish.

There are secular kingdoms, there are spiritual: neither of these trenches upon other: your kingdom is secular, Christ's is spiritual; both may, both must, stand together. His laws are divine, yours civil: his reign

is eternal, yours temporal: the glory of his rule is inward, and stands in the graces of sanctification, love, peace, righteousness, joy in the Holy Ghost; yours in outward pomp, riches, magnificence: his enemies are the devil, the world and the flesh; yours are bodily usurpers and external peace breakers: his sword is the power of the Word and Spirit; yours material; his rule is over the conscience, yours over bodies and lives; he punishes with hell, ye with temporal death or torture. Yea, so far is he from opposing your government, that "by him ye kings reign:" your sceptres are his; but to maintain, not to wield, not to resist. O the unjust fears of vain men! He takes not away your earthly kingdoms, who gives you heavenly; he discrowns not the body, who crowns the soul; his intention is not to make you less great, but more happy.

The charge is so fully answered that Pilate acquits the prisoner. The Jewish masters stand still without: their very malice dares not venture their pollution in going in to prosecute their accusation. Pilate hath examined him within, and now comes forth to these eager complainants, with a cold answer to their overhot expectation: "I find in him no fault at all." O noble testimony of Christ's innocence, from that mouth which afterwards doomed him to death! What a difference there is betwixt a man as he is himself, and as he is the servant of other's wills! It is Pilate's tongue that says, "Let him be crucified."

That cruel sentence cannot blot him, whom this attestation cleareth. Neither doth he say, I find him not guilty in that whereof he is accused; but gives a universal acquittance of the whole carriage of Christ—"I find in him no fault at all." In spite of malice, innocence shall find abettors. Rather than Christ shall want witnesses, the mouth of Pilate shall be opened to his justification.

—BP. HALL.

And Herod with his men of war set him at nought.—It became our High Priest, who was to sanctify all our sufferings, to consecrate affronts and scorn, that we may learn to endure contempt, and to suffer ourselves in a religious cause to be despised; and when it happens in any other, to remember that we have our dearest Lord for a precedent of bearing it with admirable simplicity and equanimity of deportment: and it is a mighty stock of self-love that dwells in our spirits, which makes us of all afflictions most impatient of this. But Jesus endured this despite, and suffered this to be added, that he was exposed in scorn to the boys of the streets. For Herod caused him to be arrayed in a gorgeous robe, sent him out to be scorned by the people, and hooted at by idle persons, and so remitted him to Pilate.—TAYLOR.

HYMN.

Saviour of men and Lord of love,
How sweet thy gracious name!
With joy that errand we review,
On which thy mercy came.

4 K

While all thy own angelic bands
Stood waiting on the wing,
Charmed with the honour to obey
The word of such a king.

For us mean, wretched, sinful men,
Thou laidst that glory by,
First in our mortal flesh to serve,
Then in that flesh to die.

Bought with thy service and thy blood,
We doubly, Lord, are thine!
To thee our lives we would devote,
To thee our death resign.

Blest man, who in thy cause consumes,
His vigorous days with zeal;
Then with the last slow ebb of blood
Is called thy truth to seal!

DODDRIDGE.

§ CCXXVI.

CHAP. XXIII. 13—26.

Barabbas is desired of the people and is loosed by Pilate, and Jesus is given to be crucified.

13 ¶ "And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

14 Said unto them, "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, °I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

16 ^r I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.

17 ^o (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And ^r they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas :

19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go.

23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

24 And ^r Pilate ^l gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

26 ^r And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one

Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

m Mat. xxvii. 23. Mark xv. 14. John xviii. 28; & xix. 4.—n ver. 1. 2.—o ver. 4.—p Mat. xxvii. 26. John xix. 1.—q Mat. xxvii. 16. Mark xv. 6. John xviii. 29.—r Acts iii. 14.—s Mat. xxvii. 26. Mark xv. 15. John xix. 16.—t Or appointed, Ex. xxiii. 2.—u Mat. xxvii. 32. Mark xv. 21. See John xix. 17.

See § § LXXXIX. XC.

Matthew XXVII. 15—32.

§ CCXXVII.

CHAP. XXIII. 27—33.

Christ telleth the women that lament him the destruction of Jerusalem.

27 ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 ^r For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed ~~are~~ the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck.

30 ^r Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 ^r For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

32 ^r And there were also two

other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 ^a And when they were come to the place, which is called ¹ Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

^s Mat. xxiv. 19. ch. xxi. 23.—^r Is. li. 19. Hos. x. 8. Rev. vi. 16; & ix. 6.—^y Prov. xi. 31. Jer. xxv. 29. Ezek. xi. 4; & xxi. 3, 4. ¹ Pet. iv. 17.—^s Is. liii. 12. Mat. xxvii. 38.—^s Mat. xxvii. 38. Mark xv. 22. John xix. 17, 18.—¹ Or, *the place of a skull.*

See § XCI.

Matthew XXVII. 33—38.

§ CCXXVIII.

CHAP. XXIII. 34—43.

Christ prayeth for his enemies; two evil-doers are crucified with him.

34 ¶ Then said Jesus, Father, ^b forgive them; for ^c they know not what they do. And ^d they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

35 And ^e the people stood beholding. And the ^f rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And saying, if thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

38 ^g And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and He-

brew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 ¶ ^h And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

^h Mat. v. 44. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. iv. 12.—^c Acts iii. 17.—^d Mat. xxvii. 35. Mark xv. 24. John xix. 23.—^e Ps. xxii. 17. Zech. xii. 10.—^f Mat. xxvii. 39. Mark xv. 29.—^g Mat. xxvii. 37. Mark xv. 26. John xix. 19.—^h Mat. xxvii. 44. Mark. xv. 32.

READER.—*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, &c.*—As he prayed for his enemies, so must we; as he blessed them that cursed him, so must we; as he freely forgave the men that wronged him, so must we; as he died for the truth, so must we; as he defended it to the last, without wavering, so must we; as he would not suffer any outward respects to discourage him from conscientiousness, so neither must we; as he, before his foes, witnessed a good confession, so must we; as he did good for evil, so must we; as he showed pity to men in distress, though they had affronted and done

him an injury, so must we; as he bore his cross contentedly, so must we; as he despised the world, so must we. He that remembers not his death, so as to endeavour to be like him, forgets the end of his redemption, and dishonours the Cross, on which his satisfaction was wrought: for the honour due to the Cross of Christ, is not, with the Church of Rome, to pray to a piece of Wood, called the Cross of Christ, "Hail Christ's Cross, our only hope, in this most blessed Passion Week! Increase the goodness of the good, and pardon to the guilty give;" but to live in the world as the Lord Jesus did, who was crucified for us; and by living so, to adorn the doctrine of the Cross of Christ Jesus; that is, to admire and reverence his Cross.—HORNECK.

And the people stood beholding, &c. See Commentary on Mat. XXVII. 39. § XCII.

And a superscription also was written, &c. See Commentary on Matthew XXVII. 37. § XCI.

One of the malefactors which was hanged with him, railed on him, &c.— What rudeness was this! strange! that his misery should not make the wretch more modest! But his concern was only for this present life: all that he desired was to be free from his present pain, that he might pursue his sensual inclinations as formerly. How may a man's sensuality be known by his talk! O my soul, look well to thy words and discourses. If thy heart be touched with a sense of a future glorious life, thy tongue will delight to speak of

it. If thou have an aversion from such discourses, all thy professions of eternal life will be mere wind and air: "From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If heaven and a glorious eternity hath possessed thy heart thou wilt find opportunities to utter thy inward feelings of those things with thy tongue.

But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? Friendly reproof is a great duty: yet, O my soul! how loth hast thou been to give it; and how loth hast thou been to take it, when this precious balm hath been poured out upon thy head, by a charitable neighbour! How hast thou looked upon it as gall and wormwood? and what hard thoughts hast thou entertained of the kind monitor; calling him either saucy, or meddling with things that did not concern him! and how often hast thou let thy neighbour sleep and rest in sin, when thy fraternal correction might have roused him from his slumber! O, be humbled for this great omission! And when a malefactor on the Cross thinks himself obliged not to suffer sin upon his neighbour, be not thou backward to save a soul from death.

And we, indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss.— An humble acknowledgment of our sins and demerits is the way to God's bosom. This is the first discovery of this poor man's repentance: and he begins with the noblest act of it; which is, seeking to draw others to a

sense of better things. In this, O my soul, thou hast been very remiss and neglectful, even in propagating religion, and exhorting others to see God's face. Henceforth be more diligent in gaining proselytes to Christ Jesus. And what if thy admonition prevails not; thou hast discharged a duty, and mayest rejoice in having acted according to the will of God.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.—Here is a mind set upon Heaven, and despising the world; than which nothing is more acceptable to God. He is content to endure shame, pain, tortures, piercings, aches, and all the indignities that man can offer to him, so Christ will but remember him in his kingdom. O Jesu, Son of God! give me such a mind, and temper, which may be content with any thing, so I may but obtain a share in the pleasures at thy right hand! Let even sword, and famine, and hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, seem nothing to me, so I may but enjoy thy embraces in the end! Assure me, and convince me, that the afflictions of this present life, though never so great, never so painful, never so lasting, never so bitter, or piercing, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ere long shall be revealed in me!

Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.—How ready is Christ to cherish the penitent, that abhors himself for his deformity, and sees greater beauty, and excellency, and satisfaction in

the ways of holiness, and a spiritual life, than in all the comforts of this world. Blessed Saviour, how ready art thou to stretch forth thine arms to such humble and contrite spirits! "Thou art readier to grant, than they to ask; and even before they cry, thou hearest them." Oh, let this be an encouragement to me, to deplore my sins; and to bewail mine offences; to detest what I have been doing against thee, and to seek first thy kingdom, and its righteousness; that now thou art in thy kingdom, thou mayest remember me; and when I leave this world, mayest bid me enter into my master's joy.—HORNECK.

HYMN.

Father, forgive, his mercy cried,
With his expiring breath;
And drew eternal blessings down,
On those who wrought his death.

Thus may I hope for pardon too,
Though I have pierced the Lord;
Blest Jesus! in my favour speak
That all prevailing word.

I knew not what my madness did,
While I remained thy foe;
Soon as I saw the wounds were thine,
My tears began to flow.

Melted by goodness so divine:
I would its footsteps trace;
And, while beneath thy cross I stand,
My fiercest foes embrace.

DODDRIDGE.

§ CCXXIX.

CHAP. XXIII. 44—56.

The death of Christ. His burial.

44 'And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a

darkness over all the ' earth un-
til the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was dark-
ened, and ' the veil of the tem-
ple was rent in the midst.

46 ¶ And when Jesus had
cried with a loud voice, he said,
' Father, into thy hands I com-
mend my spirit: " and having
said thus, he gave up the ghost.

47 " Now, when the centurion
saw what was done, he glorified
God, saying, Certainly this was
a righteous man.

48 And all the people that
came together to that sight,
beholding the things which were
done, smote their breasts, and
returned.

49 ° And all his acquaintance,
and the women that followed
him from Galilee, stood afar off,
beholding these things.

50 ¶ ^p And, behold, *there was*
a man named Joseph, a coun-
sellor: *and he was a good man,*
and a just:

51 (The same had not con-
sented to the counsel and deed
of them;) *he was* of Arimathæa,
a city of the Jews: ' who also
himself waited for the kingdom
of God.

52 This *man* went unto Pilate,
and begged the body of Jesus.

53 ' And he took it down,
and wrapped it in linen, and laid
it in a sepulchre that was hewn

in stone, wherein never man
before was laid.

54 And that day was ' the
preparation, and the sabbath
drew on.

55 And the women also,
' which came with him from
Galilee, followed after, and " be-
held the sepulchre, and how his
body was laid.

56 And they returned, and
' prepared spices and ointments;
and rested the sabbath day ' ac-
cording to the commandment.

(Mat. xxvii. 45. Mark xv. 43.—) Or, *land*—t Mat. xxvii. 51. Mark xv. 43.—) Pa. xxxi. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 23.—
m Mat. xxvii. 50. Mark xv. 47. John xix. 30.—u Mat. xxvii. 54. Mark xv. 43.—) Ps. xxxviii. 11. Mat. xxvii. 45. Mark xv. 40. See John xix. 38.—) Mat. xxvii. 47. Mark xv. 42. John xix. 38.—) Mark xv. 43. ch. ii. 3. 28.—) Mat. xxvii. 50. Mark xv. 43.—) Mat. xxvii. 61.—) ch. viii. 2.—) Mark xv. 47.—) Mark xvi. 1.—) Ex. xx. 13.

READER.—*And it was about the sixth hour, &c.* See Commentary on Matthew XXVII. 45. § XCII.

And the sun was darkened, &c. See Commentary on Matthew XXVII. 51. § XCIII.

He gave up the ghost. See Commentary on Matthew XXVII. 50. § XCIII.

When the centurion saw what was done, &c. See Commentary on Matthew XXVII. 54. § XCIII.

And behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor, &c. See Commentary on Matthew XXVII. 57—60. § CXIV.

And the women also, &c. See Commentary on Matthew XXVII. 61. § XCIV.

§ CCXXX.

CHAP. XXIV. 1—12.

Christ's resurrection is declared by two angels to the women that come to the sepulchre. These report it to others.

Now ^a upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, ^b bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2 ^c And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 ^d And they entered in, and found *not* the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, ^e behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye ^f the living among the dead ?

6 He is not here, but is risen : ^g remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And ^h they remembered his words,

7 ⁱ And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these

things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and ^j Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and *other women that were with them*, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 ^k And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 ^l Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre : and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

^a Mat. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. John xx. 1.—^b ch. xxviii. 56.—^c Mat. xxviii. 2. Mark xvi. 4.—^d ver. 23. Mark xvi. 6.—^e John xx. 12. Acts i. 16.—^f Or, *him that lieth.*—^g Mat. xvi. 21 ; & xvii. 23. Mark viii. 31 ; & ix. 13. ch. ix. 22.—^h John ii. 22.—ⁱ Mat. xxviii. 8. Mark xvi. 10.—^j ch. viii. 3.—^k Mark xvi. 11. ver. 26.—^l John xx. 3, 6.

See § XCV.

Matthew XXVIII. 1—10.

§ CCXXXI.

CHAP. XXIV. 13—35.

Christ himself appeareth to the two disciples that went to Emmaus.

13 ¶ ^m And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* three-score furlongs.

14 And they talked together

of these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, "Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But " their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad ?

18 And the one of them, " whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days ?

19 And he said unto them, What things ? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, " which was a prophet " mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.

20 " And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted " that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel : and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain " women also of our company made us

astonished, which were early at the sepulchre ;

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And " certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said : but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

26 " Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ?

27 " And beginning at " Moses and " all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went : and " he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But " they constrained him, saying, Abide with us : for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, " he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were

opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

m Mark xvi. 12.—s Mat. xviii. 20. ver. 36.—o John xx. 14: & xxi. 4.—p John xix. 26.—q Mat. xxi. 11. ch. vii. 16. John iii. 2; & iv. 19; & vi. 14. Acts ii. 22.—r Acts vii. 22.—s ch. xxiii. 1. Acts xiii. 27, 28.—t ch. i. 68; & ii. 38. Acts i. 5.—u Mat. xviii. 8. Mark xvi. 10. ver. 9, 10. John xx. 18.—v ver. 12.—w ver. 46. Acts xvii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 11.—x ver. 46.—y Gen. iii. 16; & xxi. 18; & xxvi. 4; & xlix. 10. Num. xxi. 9. Deut. xviii. 15.—z Ps. xvi. 9, 10; & xxi. 1; & xxxii. 11. Is. vii. 14; & ix. 6; & xl. 10, 11; & l. 6; & liii. Jer. xxiii. 6; & xxxiii. 14, 15. Ezek. xxxiv. 23; & xxxvii. 25. Dan. ix. 24. Mic. vii. 20. Mal. iii. 1; & iv. 2. See on John i. 46.—c See Gen. xxiii. 26; & xlii. 7. Mark vi. 48.—d Gen. xix. 3. Acts xvi. 16.—e Mat. xiv. 19.—f Or, ceased to be seen of them. See ch. iv. 30. John viii. 59.—g 1 Cor. xv. 6.

READER.—*Two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, &c.*—Christ came unknown to them, while they were discoursing together of the great news of that time, namely, the death of their master, whom they acknowledge a “prophet, mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people,” ver. 19, confirmed by God to be so by miracles, and confessed to be so by the people. Yet they questioned whether he were the Messiah

that should redeem Israel, and erect the kingdom so much promised and predicted in the Scripture. They could not tell how to reconcile the ignominy of his death with the grandeur of his office, and glory of a king. And, though they had heard by the women of a vision of angels that assured them he was alive, yet they do not seem in their discourse to give any credit to the report, but relate it as they heard it; though both by what they said before, verse 21, “That they had trusted that it was he that should have redeemed Israel,” and also by the sharp reproof Christ gives them, verse 25, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken,” we may conclude, that they thought it a mere illusion, or groundless imagination of the women.

—CHARNOCK.

Then said he unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe, &c.—Christ, to rectify their minds, begins with a reproof, and follows it with an instruction, that what they thought a ground to question the truth of his office, and the reality of his being the Messiah, was rather an argument to confirm and establish it; since that person, whose character was foretold in the Old Testament to be the Messiah, was to wade to his glory through a sea of blood, and such sufferings in every kind as cruel and shameful, as that person, in whom they thought they had been deceived, had suffered three days before; and afterwards, discourseth from the Scripture, that his death, and such a kind of death, did well

agree with the predictions of the prophets, and therefore, "Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." He might well sum up in two or three hours time (wherein we may suppose he was with them) most of those testimonies which foretold his sufferings for the expiation of sin. The proposition which he maintains from Moses and the prophets, is in the text, "Ought not Christ to have suffered those things?" which is laid down by way of interrogation, but is equivalent to an affirmation; and he backed, without question, his discourse with many reasonings for the confirmation of it; to reduce them from the distrust they had to a full assent to the necessity of his death, in order to his own glory, and consequently theirs; the foundation of his own exaltation, and the redemption of mankind being laid in his being a sacrifice.—

CHARNOCK.

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?—It is said, "he ought;" not an absolute but a conditional "ought." Not his original duty as the Son of God, but a voluntary duty as the Redeemer of man. He voluntarily engaged at first in it, and voluntarily proceeded to the utmost execution; yet necessarily after his first engagement. Necessity there was, but not compulsion. All necessity doth not imply constraint, and exclude will. Paul must necessarily die by the law appointed to all men, but willingly he "desires to be dissolved, and to be with

834

Christ." God is necessarily holy and true, yet not unwillingly so. Angels and glorified souls are necessarily holy by their confirmation in a gracious and glorious state, yet voluntarily so by a full and free inclination. Necessary by the decree and counsel of God, necessary by the predictions and prophecies of Scripture. All which causes of necessity are linked together, because the restoration of man required such a suffering; therefore it was from eternity decreed by God, embraced by Christ, published in Scripture. It was ordained in heaven, and set out in the manifesto of the Old Testament; so that if this death had not been suffered, the counsel of God concerning redemption had been defeated; the word and promises of Christ violated, and the truth of God in the predictions of the prophets had fallen to the ground. The decree of God was declared in many prophecies before the execution, and this will of God is an evidence of the necessity of it. Why did he ordain it, if it were not necessary to so great an end? Though the end, the redemption of man, was not necessary, yet when the end was resolved on, this, as the means, was found necessary in the counsel of God. The natural inclination and will of Christ, as man, did startle at it, when he desired that this cup might pass from him. It was contrary to the reason and common sense of men; how then should that infinite wisdom which wills nothing but what is unquestionably reasonable, have determined such a

means, if it had not been necessary for his own glory, and man's recovery? But both the Father and the Son were moved to it by the height of that good will they bore to the fallen creature.

"These things." Every one of those severe and sharp circumstances. The whole system of those sufferings; not a dart that pierced him, not a reproach that grated upon him, but was ordained: every step he took in blood and suffering, was marked out to him. Since Christ was to die for the reparation of man, for the expiation of sin; it was necessary that his death should be attended with those particular sharpnesses that might render his love more admirable, the justice of God more dreadful, the evil of sin more abominable, and the satisfaction itself more valuable. The intensity of his love had not been set off so amiably in a light and easy death, as in a painful and shameful suffering. And though the greatness of his merit, and the fulness of his satisfaction, did principally arise from the dignity of the suffering person; yet some consideration might be also had of the greatness of his suffering: not only his death, as he was considered equal with God, but his shameful death in the circumstance of the cross, is a mark of obedience and a cause of his exaltation, Phil. ii. 8. Both were regarded in the crown of glory, and that high dignity wherein he was instated. So that the sum of Christ's speech amounts to thus much: Be not doubtful whether the person

so lately suffering, whom you account so great a prophet, were the Messiah. You clearly may see in the prophets, that nothing hath been inflicted on him, but what was predicted of him. So that it is not merely the malice of man that hath caused those sufferings; that was only a means God in his infinite wisdom used, to bring about his own counsel. He was not forced to what he suffered, but willingly delivered up himself to perform the charge and office of a Redeemer, which could not else have been accomplished by him. And that glory which you expected, was not by the order of God to be conferred upon him, till he abased himself to such a passion. He will have a glory to your comfort, though not answering your carnal expectations. Be not dejected, but recover your hopes of redemption, which you seem to have lost, and let them be rectified in the expectation, not of an earthly, but a heavenly glory.—CHAENOCK.

And to enter into his glory.—His exaltation therefore, was a necessary sign that he had fulfilled righteousness, and disarmed justice, conquered death and hell, and opened the gates of heaven; since he suffered as our surety, his glory would manifestly be conferred on him because he so suffered, and therefore it would respect our interest; and though by the efficacy of his death, had he only risen again, we had been freed from those torments that remain after death; yet had he not been glorified in heaven, we could not have been restored to the happiness of that Paradise we had lost,

no more than our bodies could have been delivered from the darkness of the grave, had he himself remained under the chains of death. We should have wandered about the earth without a supreme felicity, though without a smarting punishment. But by his glory we have a certain evidence, that we are not only freed from the dominion of death, but made heirs of life, and have a pledge in our hands that we shall enjoy it. If we have a union with him by faith, and a communion with him in the power of his death, there is no doubt but we shall have a communion with him in the felicities of his heavenly glory: and to such a confirmation of our faith and hope was an entrance into his glory necessary.—CHARNOCK.

And he went in to tarry with them.
—When they came to Emmaus, he went into the same house, through their earnest request, and sat down with them to table. At this repast he blessed and distributed the bread, according to his former manner, perhaps with the solemnity of the Sacramental Supper; and immediately the dimness, which had been cast over their eyes, was removed, and they recognized the person of their beloved master. But, the end of his appearance being answered, he instantly withdrew from their sight.

As they reviewed this singular occurrence, they wondered at their own stupidity, remarking that they might have known him from the extraordinary energy of his words, and the effect produced in their minds.

They said one to another, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Their doubts were all removed; they felt a rational conviction of their Lord’s resurrection, and perceived that every thing had happened in perfect consistence with God’s declarations. That same evening they returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Apostles assembled together, and exulting in the thought that their Lord was risen indeed, and had shown himself to Peter. The different accounts were then compared; and yet, decisive as these testimonies were, some at least in the company withheld their assent; or, perhaps, allowing the accounts, concluded that his spirit only had been seen, and that his body, if revived, was carried up to heaven. How gracious and condescending was the Saviour to these weak, doubting, and incredulous disciples! To satisfy their scruples, and prove incontestably that his reanimated body yet remained upon earth, he manifested himself again that very hour.—ROBINSON.

HYMN.

Light of the world, shine on our souls;
Thy grace to us afford;
And, while we meet to learn thy truth,
Be thou our teacher, Lord.

As once Thou didst thy word expound,
To those that walk’d with Thee;
So teach us, Lord, to understand,
And its bless’d fulness see.

Its riches, sweetness, power, and depth,
Its holiness discover;

Its joyful news of saving grace,
By bless'd experience learn.

Help us each other to assist,
Thy Spirit now impart;
Keep humble, but with love inflame,
To thee and thine, each heart.

Thus may Thy word be dearer still,
And studied more each day:
And, as it richly dwells within,
Thyself in it display.

BICKERSTETH.

§ CCXXXII.

CHAP. XXIV. 36—53.

Christ afterwards appeareth to the Apostles, and reproveth their unbelief. He giveth them a charge; promiseth the Holy Ghost, and so ascendeth into Heaven.

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

41 And while they yet be-

lieved not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 ¶ And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he

lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 ^r And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 ^r And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy :

53 And were continually ^r in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

^r Mark xvi. 14. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 5.—^h Mark vi. 49.—ⁱ John xx. 20, 27.—^h Gen. xiv. 26.—ⁱ John xxi. 5.—^m Acts x. 41.—^m Mat. xvi. 21 : & xvii. 22 ; & xx. 18. Mark viii. 31. ch. ix. 22 ; & xviii 31. ver. 8.—^o Acts xvi. 14.—^p ver. 26. Ps. xxii. 1s. 1. 6 ; & liii. 2, &c. Acts xvii. 3.—^q Dan. ix. 24. Acts xiii. 38, 46. 1 John ii. 12.—^r Gen. xli. 8. Ps. xxii. 27. 1s. xlix. 6, 22. Jer. xxxi. 34. Hos. ii. 23. Mic. iv. 2. Mal. i. 11.—^s John xv. 27. Acts i. 8, 22 ; & ii. 32 ; & iii. 15.—^t 1s. xlv. 3. Joel ii. 28. John xiv. 16, 26 ; & xv. 26 ; & xvi. 7. Acts i. 4 ; & ii. 1, &c.—^w Acts i. 12.—^y 2 Kings ii. 11. Mark xvi. 19. John xx. 17. Acts i. 9. Eph. iv. 8.—^z Mat. xviii. 9, 17.—^a Acts 46 ; & v. 42.

READER.—*Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, &c.*—Those disciples, whose flight scattered them upon their Master's apprehension, are now, at night, like a dispersed covey, met together by their mutual call : their assembly is secret ; when the light was shut in, when the doors were shut up. Still were they fearful, still were the Jews malicious. The assured tidings of their Master's resurrection and life hath filled their hearts with joy and wonder. While their thoughts and speech are taken up with so happy a subject, his miraculous and sudden presence bids their senses be witnesses of his reviving and their happiness. "When the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and

said, "Peace be unto you." O Saviour, how thou camest in hither, I wonder, I inquire not : I know not what a glorified body can do ; I know there is nothing that thou canst not do. Had not thine entrance been recorded for strange and supernatural, why was thy standing in the midst noted before thy passage into the room ? Why were the doors said to be shut while thou camest in ? Why were thy disciples amazed to see thee ere they heard thee ? Doubtless, they that once before took thee for a spirit when thou didst walk upon the waters, could not but be astonished to see thee, while the doors were barred, without any noise of thy entrance to stand in the midst : well might they think, thou couldst not thus be there, if thou wert not the God of spirits. There might seem more scruple of thy reality than of thy power ; and therefore, after thy wonted greeting, thou showedst them thy hands and thy feet, stamped with the impressions of thy late sufferings. Thy respiration shall argue the truth of thy life. Thou breathest on them as a man, thou givest them thy Spirit as a God ; and as God and man thou sendest them on the great errand of thy gospel.—HALL.

Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, &c.

See Commentary on vrs. 26, 27.

While he blessed them he was parted from them and carried up into Heaven.—Whensoever I think of my blessed Saviour, the Sun of righteousness, I apprehend, or rather by the eye of

faith, I behold him in the highest heavens, there shining in glory and splendour infinitely greater than any mortal eye can bear, invested with supreme majesty, honour, and authority over the whole creation. I behold him there surrounded with an innumerable company of holy angels, as so many fixed stars, and of glorified saints, as planets, enlightened by him: all his satellites or servants waiting upon him, ready upon all occasions to reflect and convey his benign influences or favour to his people upon earth. I see him yonder, by his own light, I behold him displaying his bright beams, and diffusing his light round about, over his whole church, both that which is triumphant in heaven, and that which is militant here on earth; that all the members of it may see all things belonging to their peace. I behold him continually sending down his quickening Spirit upon those that are baptized into, and believe in, his holy name, to regenerate them, to be a standing principle of a new and divine life in them. I behold him there manifesting himself and causing his face to shine upon those who look up to him, so as to refresh and cheer their spirits, to make them brisk and lively, and able to run "with patience the race that is set before them." I behold him there continually issuing forth his Holy Spirit, to actuate and influence the administration of his word and sacraments; that all who duly receive them may thereby grow in grace, and be fruitful in every good word

and work. I behold the Sun of righteousness shining with so much power and efficacy upon his church, that all the good works that are done in it, though imperfect in themselves, do notwithstanding appear through him as good and righteous in the sight of God himself, and are accordingly rewarded by him. In short, as the sun was made to govern the day, so I behold the Sun of righteousness as governing his church, and ordering all things both within and without it, so as to make them work together for the good of those who love God, till he hath brought them all to himself, to live with them in the highest heavens, where they shall also, by his means, "shine forth as the sun" in the kingdom of their Father for ever; Matt. xiii. 43. Could we keep these and such like thoughts of our blessed Saviour always fresh in our minds, could we be always thus looking upon him, as the Sun of righteousness shining continually upon us and his whole church, what holy, what heavenly, what comfortable lives should we then lead! We should then despise the pomps and vanities of this wicked world as nothing, as less than nothing, in comparison of this most glorious sun and his righteousness. We should then, with St. Paul, "count all things but loss in comparison of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord," and should "count them but dung, that we may win Christ, and be found in him; not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is of God by faith;" Phil. iii. 8, 9. We should

ST. JOHN I. 1—18.

then leave gazing upon the trifles of the lower world, and should be always looking up to the Sun of righteousness, so as to be enlightened by him, Psalm xxxiv. 5, with such a light as will discover to us the glories of the other world together with the way that leads to it.

We should then abhor and detest the works of darkness, and walk as the children of light, and accordingly shine as lights in the world. And then we should have the light of God's countenance shining continually upon us, and enlightening, enlivening, and refreshing our whole souls, and purifying both our hearts and lives, so as to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; in that everlasting light which comes from the Sun

of righteousness, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

'Tis the Saviour! seraphs, raise
Your eternal songs of praise:
Let the earth's remotest bound
Hear the joy-inspiring sound.

Lift, ye saints, lift up your eyes;
Now to glory see Him rise:
Hosts of angels on the road
Hail and sing th' incarnate God.

Heaven unfolds its portals wide:
Gracious conqueror through them ride!
King of glory mount thy throne!
Boundless empire is thine own.

Praise Him, all ye heavenly choirs,
Praise and sweep your golden lyres;
Praise Him in the noblest songs,
From ten thousand thousand tongues.
SCOTT.

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

S T . J O H N .

§ CCXXV.

CHAP. I. 1—18.

*The divinity, humanity, and office of
Jesus Christ.*

IN the beginning ^a was the Word,
and the Word was ^b with God,
^c and the Word was God.

240

2 ^a The same was in the beginning with God.

3 ^a All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 ^a In him was life; and ^c the life was the light of men.

5 And ^a the light shineth in

darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 ¶ ' There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 ' The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 ' That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 ' He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But ' as many as received him, to them gave he ' power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name :

13 ' Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 ' And the Word ' was made ' flesh, and dwelt among us, (and ' we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) ' full of grace and truth.

15 ¶ ' John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, ' He

4 x

that cometh after me is preferred before me : ' for he was before me.

16 And of his 'fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For ' the law was given by Moses, but ' grace and ' truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 ' No man hath seen God at any time ; ' the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

a Prov. viii. 22, 23, &c. Col. i. 17. 1 John i. 1. Rev. i. 2; & 19, 13. b Prov. viii. 30. ch. xvii. 5. 1 John i. 2. c Phil. ii. 6. 1 John v. 7. d Gen. i. 1. e Psalm xxxiii. 6. Col. i. 16. ver. 10. Eph. iii. 9. Heb. i. 2. Rev. v. 11. f ch. v. 26. 1 John v. 11. g ch. viii. 12; & ix. 5; & xii. 36, 46. h ch. iii. 19. i Mal. iii. 1. Mar. iii. 1. Luke iii. 2. ver. 38. k Acts xix. 4. l ver. 4. Isaiah xlix. 6. 1 John ii. 8. m ver. 3. Heb. i. 2; & xi. 3. n Luke xix. 14. Acts iii. 26; & xii. 46. o Is. lvi. 5. Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iii. 26. 2 Pet. i. 4. 1 John iii. 1. p Or, the right, or, privilege. q ch. iii. 5. James i. 18. 1 Peter i. 23. r Mat. i. 16, 20. Luke i. 31, 35; & ii. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 16. s Rom. i. 3. Gal. iv. 4. t Heb. ii. 11, 14, 16, 17. u Is. xl. 5. Mat. xvii. 2. ch. ii. 11, & xi. 40. v Peter i. 17. w Col. i. 19; & ii. 3, 9. x ver. 32. ch. iii. 32; & v. 33. y Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 7. Luke iii. 16. ver. 27, 30. ch. iii. 31. z ch. viii. 56. Col. i. 17. a ch. iii. 34. Eph. i. 6, 7, 8. Col. i. 19; & ii. 9, 10. b Ex. xx. 1, &c. Deut. iv. 44; & v. 1; & xxxiii. 4. c Rom. ii. 24; & v. 21; & vi. 14. d ch. viii. 32; & xiv. 6. e Ex. xxxiii. 20. Deut. iv. 12. Mat. xi. 27. Luke x. 22. ch. vi. 46. 1 Tim. i. 17; & vi. 16. 1 John iv. 12, 20. f ver. 14. ch. 3, 16, 18. 1 John iv. 9.

READER.—*In the beginning was the Word, &c.* This gospel opens with a sublime and most important declaration of the nature and office of the adorable Redeemer. When we consider the history of his life and actions, we plainly discover that he was more than man,—more than a righteous man,—more than a prophet. Some points of resemblance may be traced between the Lord Jesus Christ and certain human messengers of God; but there are many respects in which he is altogether superior to them all. We see him working miracles by his

own authority and power; and we trace in his character that perfect purity and majesty which never appeared in any but himself. He is man, indeed; but he is, he must be, more than man. Who is he? He is God! He is the eternal Being, co-existent with the Father, and one with him, the author of creation, the fountain of spiritual life and light! Such is the description of his nature and character which we find in the verses before us. Here the great question concerning the nature and office of the Redeemer receives a sufficient answer. If we push our inquiries too far, with vain or presumptuous curiosity, we shall soon be baffled and confused. Must we insist upon knowing exactly how the Word or Son of God is *with*, or as it is elsewhere expressed, *in* the Father, and the Father in him, so that the unity of the Godhead remains undivided? Let us remember that this is to require no less than to find out to perfection, to comprehend fully, the nature of the eternal Jehovah. And before we venture upon such a speculation, let us charge ourselves to do (for example) this one thing; namely, to determine how a brute animal could understand our method of communicating an impression of our thoughts to a friend at the distance of the globe's circumference, without an interview or a word spoken! When an irrational creature can so far comprehend the mind of man as to understand the mystery of a letter or a printed book, we may begin to think it possible

for ourselves to obtain some insight into the mysteries of the Divine essence. But let us be content to learn what God has been pleased to reveal. Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, existed from eternity in his Divine nature, before he assumed that human soul and body with which he appeared on earth. He was "in the beginning." This eternal Being is one with Jehovah, the true and living God. During his sojourn upon earth he declared, "Before Abraham was, I am;" and again, "I and the Father are one." The Jews charged him with blasphemy, because that he, being a man, made himself God. But our Lord persisted in his claim, and said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." (John x. 30, 37, 38.) He, whose "name is called The Word of God," "hath also on his vesture and on his thigh a name written King of kings and Lord of lords." (Rev. xix. 13, 16.)—Further, this eternal Being, and fellow of Jehovah, is the author of creation: "All things were made by him." "God," says St. Paul, "created all things by Jesus Christ." Eph. iii. 9. And again, "He is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. i. 17. In this latter passage we are taught to attribute to the Son of God, not only the original creation of all things, but, their continual preservation, or the work of an upholding and superintending provi-

ST. JOHN I. 1—18.

dence; as likewise in Heb. i. 2, 3; "His Son—by whom also he made the worlds;—the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power."—Yet once more, the Word of God, by whom all things were made and are sustained, is the fountain of life, and of intellectual and spiritual light. "In him was life." This is in accordance with his own saying: "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (John v. 26.) And he gave a proof of this fact when he rose in triumph from the grave, having overcome death, by which it was not possible that he should be holden. It was God,—God in intimate union with his human nature,—that raised up Jesus. It was Jesus who raised up himself by his own power. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." John x. 18. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (xi. 25, 26.) "Believest thou this?" Oh for a constant faith, which may keep the Saviour ever before us as the Lord and giver of life!—"And the life was the light of men." It is he who can illumine our dark souls. He said of himself, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii. 12. We are, by nature, in a state of spiritual and moral darkness; we are blind with respect to those truths which most

nearly concern the welfare of our immortal souls. And all men around us are, in themselves, as erring and as ignorant as we are. Neither by our own wisdom, nor by the united wisdom of the world, can we know and apprehend the things which belong unto our peace. A ray from above must penetrate our souls, or else all will be darkness there for ever. But the Word of God, in mercy, condescends to be the light of fallen man. Let us take him for our teacher—let us follow his guidance, and yield to the influence of his blessed Spirit dwelling within us, and we shall be wise unto salvation!—It is, alas, too possible that this light may shine on us in vain. "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The darkness may fail to comprehend this celestial light,—by obstinacy, by carelessness, by worldly-mindedness, by sensual indulgence. We may continue to be blind to the light which shines so brightly in the glorious gospel of the Son of God; we may shut out from our hearts the beams of the Sun of righteousness himself! And let this thought serve for our admonition.—But let us, at the same time, derive encouragement from a survey of the happy consequence of receiving the truth, and walking in its light. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on

ST. JOHN I. 1—18.

his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." How inestimable is our privilege in having been called to a knowledge of Him who is the light of the world, and to a participation of his saving and sanctifying grace! How carefully should we seek and cherish that living faith whereby our souls may be continually kept beneath the rays of that Divine illumination!

While we pursue our meditations on this holy gospel of the beloved apostle, we shall hear many a lesson of wisdom from the mouth of our heavenly instructor; and we shall witness that spotless righteousness and meritorious sacrifice whereby the Word, made flesh and dwelling among us, became the Saviour of a lost world,—the author of eternal life to those who were dead in trespasses and sins. May we have holy and sweet communion with him who is herein revealed to his believing people as the way, the truth, and the life!—Ed.

Lift up your hearts!

O thou great and unchangeable Jehovah, whose name is One, and whose glory is not imparted to another, we adore thee, and offer unto thee the praises of most thankful hearts for that thou hast vouchsafed to reveal thyself to us, by the Eternal Word, and through the agency of the Holy Spirit, as a God of compassion and love! May our souls be deeply impressed with a sense of thy majesty and thy mercy;

64

and may we at all times thankfully and reverently draw nigh unto thee, in the way which thou hast chosen!

O Lord Jesu Christ, who didst take upon thee the form of a servant, and wast made in the likeness of men, but in that form and likeness didst speak as never man spake, and didst work those works which none but the Almighty could perform, we devoutly acknowledge Thee to be one with the Father, who wast in the beginning, the eternal, God over all, blessed for ever! In the beginning, Lord, thou didst lay the foundation of the earth; all things were made by thee, and without thee was not anything made that was made. Oh that the works of thy hands may be continually, through thy grace, a means of leading our souls to Thee!

Fountain of life and light! look in mercy upon us, thy fallen creatures, who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, having our understandings darkened, and our wills rebellious and perverse, and who are sinking down into everlasting ruin! May we truly know thee to be the way, the truth, and the life! Quick-en us, O Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, and engage all the powers of our souls and bodies in thy service! Raise us to the apprehension and pursuit of what is holy, just, and good; and grant that, instead of yielding to the corrupt tendencies of our own hearts, or the deadening influences of an evil world, we may live by faith in thee! Lead us forth and guide us in thy truth; enable us ever to perceive the things which

ST. JOHN I. 19—34.

belong unto our peace ; and grant that, by the teaching and influence of thy good Spirit, we may continually grow in grace, and in the knowledge of thee, our Saviour and our God !

Send forth thy light and thy truth to those who now sit in darkness and in the shadow of death ! Oh that all who have heard thy name may be made to rejoice in thee ; and may the knowledge of thy gospel and thy grace be imparted to those who have not hitherto received it ! Have mercy on those who have unthankfully rejected thee and thy great salvation ; grant them space for repentance, and plead with them yet again by thy holy and patient Spirit ! In thine own good time call others to the privileges of thy church on earth ; may many who are now afar off be brought nigh ; may they become partakers of the inheritance of thy saints in light ; and hereafter, by thy mercy, be admitted to dwell in thy presence for ever ! Amen.—ED.

HYMN.

To our Redeemer's glorious name
Awake the sacred song ;
Oh may his love, immortal flame,
Inspire each heart and tongue !
He left his radiant throne on high,
Forsook the realms of bliss,
And came as man to bleed and die ;—
Was ever love like this !
He took the dying traitor's place,
And suffered in his stead ;
For man, oh miracle of grace,
For sinful man, He bled.
Oh may the sweet, the blissful theme,
Tune ev'ry heart and tongue,
All nations know thy saving name,
And join the sacred song.

§ CCXXXIV.

CHAP. I. 19—34.

The testimony of John.

19 ¶ And this is ' the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou ?

20 And ' he confessed, and denied not ; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then ? Art thou ^a Elias ? And he saith, I am not. Art thou ' that prophet ? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou ? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself ?

23 ^a He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as ' said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet ?

26 John answered them, saying, ^m I baptize with water :

"but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27 ° He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done 'in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold 'the Lamb of God, 'which 'taketh away the sin of the world.

30 'This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, 'therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 * And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, 'the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

f ch. v. 33.—p Luke III. 15. ch. III. 28. Acts xiii. 28.—p Mal. iv. 5. Mat. xvii. 10.—/ Deut. xviii. 15, 18.—|| Or, a prophet.—p Mat. III. 3. Mark I. 3. Luke III. 4. ch. III. 28.—/ Is. ix. 3.—m Mat. III. 11.—p Mal. III. 1.—p ver. xv. 30. Acts xix. 4.—p Judg. vii. 24. ch. x. 40.—p Ex. xii. 3. Is. liii. 7. ver. 36. Acts viii. 32. 1 Pet. i. 19. Rev. v. 6; &c.—p Is. liii. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. i. 4. Heb. i. 8; & II. 17; & ix. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 24; & iii. 18. 1 John ii. 2; & iii. 5; & iv. 10. Rev. i. 5.—p Or, beareth.—p ver. xv. 27.—/ Mal. III. 1. Mat. III. 6. Luke i. 17, 76, 77; & iii. 3, 4.—p Mat. III. 16. Mark i. 10. Luke III. 22. ch. v. 32.—p Mat. III. 11. Acts i. 5; & II. 4; & x. 44; & xix. 6.

READER.—*This is the record of John.*

See Commentary on Matthew III. 1—12. § X. and Luke III. 15—17. § CLXI.

Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!—In this remarkable saying of the Baptist every word hath its weight and emphasis. *Behold!* see here the person I told you of, the Lamb without spot and blemish, the perfect emblem of innocence and patience; "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" the Lamb typified by that which you sacrifice every morning and evening, and especially by the Paschal Lamb, which was roasted in such a posture (as Justin Martyr, and others, observe) that it exactly represented a person hanging upon a cross. Yea, "Behold the Lamb of God;" a Lamb not of an earthly, but Divine extraction; the Lamb of God's own choosing and appointment; the Lamb of God's own eternal generation, the only begotten of the Father; the Lamb offered up by God himself, unto himself. And so, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away sin;" not that expiates or covers it, but takes it quite away; not that hath or will take it away, but, as St. Chrysostom observes, that doth take it away continually; and that taketh away not

ST. JOHN I. 19—34.

only some particular sins, but sin in general: and so, whatsoever there is in sin that either offends God or can hurt us; the strength, as well as the guilt of sin; our inclinations to it, as well as our obligations to punishment for it: and that taketh away the sin, not only of some particular persons, but the sin of the world; the sin not only of Abraham's but Adam's posterity; the sin of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; for "he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. Thus, whensoever we see Christ, either with the eye of sense or faith, we may cry out with the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—BEVERIDGE.

Neither is it enough that we thus believe that Christ died for mankind in general; but, in the last place, every one should believe that Christ died for him, and for his sins in particular; so as to apply the sufferings of the human nature in Christ to his own particular human person. For, seeing it is expressly said that Christ tasted death for every man, every man ought to believe he did it for him. Heb. ii. 9. And as no man can believe this except he repent, so no man can truly repent of all his sins, but he may and ought to believe this, even that Christ died for him, and for those very sins which he hath repented of. Thus we find St. Paul acting his faith, so as to appropriate Christ unto himself: "I am crucified," saith he, "with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but

Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20.

Thus every one that repents and believes the gospel should look upon himself as particularly interested in what Christ did and suffered for mankind, as much as if he had done and suffered it only for him; so that I am bound, and so is every one else, not only "to confess with my mouth," but "to believe in my heart" that he became the Son of man, that I might partake of his Divine nature; he was "delivered for my offences," and "raised again for my justification;" he was "made sin for me," that "I might be made the righteousness of God in him;" he died, that I might live, and was crucified by men, that I might be glorified with God for ever; for "he loved me, and gave himself for me:" and, therefore, now that I remember his death, and see him, methinks, upon the cross, I cannot but cry out, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" in general, and my sins in particular.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

Behold the Lamb of God, who bore
Thy burdens on the tree;
And paid in blood the dreadful score,
The ransom due for thee.

Look to Him till the sight endears
The Saviour to thy heart;
His pierced feet bedew with tears,
Nor from his cross depart.

Look to him till his dying love
Thy ev'ry thought control;

Its vast constraining influence prove
O'er body, spirit, soul.

Look to Him, as the race you run,
Your never failing friend ;
Finish He will the work begun,
And grace in glory end.

§ CCXXXV.

CHAP. I. 35—51.

The calling of Andrew, Peter, &c.

35 ¶ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples ;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, ' Behold the Lamb of God !

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye ? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where ' dwell-est thou ?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day : for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was ' Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto

him, We have found the Me-
sias, which is, being interpreted,
' the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus be-
held him, he said, Thou art
Simon the son of Jonah : ' thou
shalt be called Cephas, which is
by interpretation, ' A stone.

43 ¶ The day following Jesus
would go forth into Galilee, and
findeth Philip, and saith unto
him, Follow me.

44 Now ' Philip was of
Bethsaida, the city of Andrew
and Peter.

45 Philip findeth ' Nathanael,
and saith unto him, We have
found him, of whom ' Moses in
the law, and the ' prophets, did
write, Jesus ' of Nazareth, the
son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto
him, ' Can there any good thing
come out of Nazareth ? Philip
saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael
coming to him, and saith of him,
Behold ' an Israelite indeed, in
whom is no guile !

48 Nathanael saith unto him,
Whence knowest thou me :
Jesus answered and said unto
him, before that Philip called
thee, when thou wast under the
fig tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and
saith unto him, Rabbi, ' thou art

the Son of God; thou art ^a the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

y ver. 29.—¹ Or, *abideth*.—¹ That was two hours before night.—^a Mat. iv. 18.—¹ Or, *the anointed*.—^a Mat. xvi. 18.—¹ Or, *Peter*.—^b ch. xii. 21.—^c ch. xxi. 2.—^d Gen. iii. 15; & xlix. 10. Det. xviii. 18. See on Luke xxiv. 27.—^e Is. iv. 2; & vii. 14; & ix. 6; & liii. 2. Mic. v. 2. Zech. vi. 12; & ix. 9. See more on Luke xxiv. 27.—^f Mat. ii. 23. Luke ii. 4.—^g ch. vii. 41, 42, 52.—^h Ps. xxxii. 2; & lxxiii. 1. ch. viii. 59. Rom. ii. 28, 29; & ix. 6.—ⁱ Mat. xiv. 33.—^k Mat. xxi. 5; & xxvii. 11, 42. ch. xviii. 37; & xix. 3.—^l Gen. xviii. 12. Mat. iv. 11. Luke ii. 9, 13; & xxii. 43; & xxiv. 4. Acts. i. 10.

READER.—*Jesus saith unto him, Follow me!*

See Commentary on Matthew IV. 19. § XIII.

Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.—Freedom from guile, that fair simplicity of which the Psalmist speaks, is deservedly reckoned among the chief endowments of a pure soul, and is here named instead of all the rest, as nothing is more like to that God who inspects the very heart, in nothing do we so much resemble him; and therefore it is most agreeable to him, because most like him. He is the most simple of all beings, and is indeed truth itself, and therefore he "desires truth in the inward parts," and hates *a heart and a heart*, as the Hebrew phrase is to express those that are double hearted. And how much

our blessed Redeemer esteems this simplicity, we may learn from the earnestness with which he inculcates it upon his disciples, that they should be "simple as doves;" Mat. x. 16. We may also learn it from the honourable testimony he bears to this character in Nathanael, when he pronounces him, "an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile," John i. 47; and especially from his own perfect example, as it is said of him, 1 Pet. ii. 22, "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."—LEIGHTON.

When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee.—God is a spiritual being, and therefore is invisible to the dull eyes of flesh; but the quick eye of faith can see "him who is invisible," as it was said of Moses, Heb. ii. 27. It fixeth its eye upon the all-seeing eye of God, and fills the soul with awful thoughts of God's omnipresence and omniscience; that all things are naked and bare before him, in whose company we are wherever we are, and with whom we have to do whatever we are doing. Now consider with yourselves; would you commit such or such a sin, to which possibly you are tempted, if some grave person were in the room with you, whom you did much respect? And what! shall the presence of a mortal man keep you from sinning, and shall not the presence of a great God much more? shall we dare to sin, when God's eye is fixed upon us; when he views not only our outward actions, but also our inward thoughts, more clearly than we can see the faces of one another? It was the wise counsel

that a heathen man gave to a scholar of his, that if he would preserve himself from doing anything that was unbecoming, he should suppose some sober and reverend man present with him, and this would keep him from doing that which he would be ashamed to do before him. Truly, we need not make any such supposition: the great and holy God is present with us in reality; and the eye of faith discovers him so to be: he is always looking on us, yea, always looking into us: and, certainly, this, to one that can exercise the discerning eye of faith, will be a more effectual means to keep a man from sin, than if all the eyes of men and angels were upon him.—HOPKINS.

Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel!—As we are to believe God the Father, so likewise God the Son, to be always with us, even the eternal Son of God, who was pleased to become the Son of man too, by assuming our human nature into his Divine person, so as to be both God and man in one and the same person: by which means, although the human nature which he assumed never was or can be in any more than one place at once, yet the same Divine person, to which that nature is united, always was, and is, and ever will be, in all places, and know all things in heaven and earth. And therefore we read, that when he was in his mortal body upon earth, he was at the same time in heaven, John iii. 13, and everywhere, Matt. xviii. 20. He knew

the very thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25. He saw Nathanael under the fig tree, and knew his heart so well as to say he was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile, John i. 47. He knew that the woman of Samaria that talked with him had had "five husbands," although she herself said, she "had no husband." John iv. 17, 18. He knew that Lazarus was dead before any body had told him so. John xi. 14. He knew which of his disciples intended to betray him, for all that he endeavoured to keep it from him as much as he could. John xiii. 11. Yea, St. Peter appealed to his Omniscience, whether he did not love him, saying to our Saviour, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." John xxi. 17. And as Christ was thus in all places, and knew all things, whilst his human nature was still upon earth; so when he was to ascend in that to heaven, he promised notwithstanding, that he himself would still continue with his church upon earth, saying to his disciples, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 20.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

My song shall bless the Lord of all;
My praise shall climb to his abode:
Thee, Saviour, by that name I call,
The Great, Supreme, Almighty God.

Without beginning or decline,
Object of faith and not of sense;
Eternal ages saw Him shine;—
He shines eternal ages hence.

As much when in the manger laid
Almighty ruler of the sky;

ST. JOHN II. 1—12.

As when the six days' work He made,
Fill'd all the morning stars with joy.

As man he pities my complaint ;
His power and truth are all divine ;
He will not fail, he cannot faint ;
Lord, make thy full salvation mine !

§ CCXXXVI.

CHAP. II. 1—12.

Christ turneth water into wine.

AND the third day there was a marriage in ^a Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there :

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, ^b Woman, ^c what have I to do with thee? ^d mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you do *it*.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, ^e after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted ^f the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, ^g and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12 ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and ^h his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

^a See Josh. xix. 28.—^b ch. xix. 26.—^c So 2 Sam. xvi. 10; & xix. 22.—^d ch. vii. 6.—^e Mark vii. 3.—^f ch. iv. 46.—^g ch. i. 14.—^h Mat. xii. 46.

READER.—*The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee.* Happy is that wedding where Christ is a guest! O Saviour, those that marry in thee, cannot marry without thee. There is no holy marriage whereat thou art not, however invisible, yet truly present by thy Spirit, by thy

ST. JOHN II. 1—12.

gracious benediction. Thou makest marriages in heaven, thou blessest them from heaven. O thou that hast betrothed us to thyself in truth and righteousness, do thou consummate that happy-marriage of ours in the highest heavens! It was no rich or sumptuous bridal to which Christ, with his mother and disciples, vouchsafed to come from the farther parts of Galilee. I find him not at the magnificent feasts or triumphs of the great. The proud pomp of the world did not agree with the state of a servant. This poor needy bridegroom wants drink for his guests. The blessed Virgin, though a stranger to the house, out of a charitable compassion, and a friendly desire to maintain the decency of an hospitable entertainment, inquires into the wants of her host, pities them, bemoans them, where there was power of redress. "When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine." How well doth it beseech to the eyes of piety and christian love, to look into the necessities of others!—**BR. HALL.**

But what is this I hear? a sharp answer to the suit of a mother: "O woman, what have I to do with thee." He whose sweet mildness and mercy never sent away any supplicant discontented, doth he only frown upon her that bare him? He that commands us to honour father and mother, doth he disdain her whose flesh he took? God forbid, love and duty doth not exempt parents from due admonition. She solicited Christ as a mother; he

answers her as a woman. If she were the mother of his flesh, his deity was eternal. She might not so remember herself to be a mother, that she should forget she was a woman; nor so look upon him as a son, that she should not regard him as a God. He was so obedient to her as a mother, that withal she must obey him as her God. That part which he took from her shall observe her; she must observe that nature which came from above, and made her both a woman and a mother. Matter of miracle concerned the Godhead only; supernatural things were above the sphere of fleshly relation. If now the blessed Virgin will be prescribing either time or form unto Divine acts, "O woman, what have I to do with thee? my hour is not come." In all bodily actions, his style was, "O Mother:" in spiritual and heavenly, "O woman." Neither is it for us, in the holy affairs of God, to know any faces; yea, "If we have known Christ heretofore according to the flesh, henceforth know we him so no more."

O blessed Virgin, if, in that heavenly glory wherein thou art, thou canst take notice of these earthly things, with what indignation dost thou look down upon the presumptuous superstition of men, whose suits make thee more than a solicitor for Divine favours! thy humanity is not lost in thy motherhood, now in thy glory: the respects of nature reach not so high as heaven. It is far from thee to abide that honour which is stolen from thy Redeemer.

ST. JOHN II. 1—12.

There is a marriage whereunto we are invited; yea, wherein we are already interested, not as the guests only, but as the bride, in which there shall be no want of the wine of gladness. It is marvel if in these earthly banquets there be not some lack. "In thy presence, O Saviour, there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

How liberal are the provisions of Christ! if he had turned but one of these vessels, it had been a just proof of his power, and perhaps that quantity had served the present necessity: now he furnisheth them with so much wine as would have served a hundred and fifty guests for an entire feast. Even the measure magnifies at once both his power and mercy. The munificent hand of God regards not our need only, but our honest affluence. It is our sin and our shame if we turn his favour into wantonness. There must be first a filling, ere there be a drawing out. Thus, in our vessels, the first care must be of our receipt; the next of our expense. God would have us cisterns, not channels. Our Saviour would not be his own taster, but he sends the first draught to the governor of the feast. He knew his own power, they did not: neither would he bear witness of himself, but fetch it out of others mouths. They that knew not the original of that wine yet praised the taste, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men

have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." The same bounty that expressed itself in the quantity of the wine, shows itself no less in the excellence. Nothing can fall from that Divine hand not exquisite: that liberality hated to provide crab-wine for his guests. It was fit that the miraculous effects of Christ, which came from his immediate hand, should be more perfect than the natural. O blessed Saviour, how delicate is that new wine which we shall one day drink with thee in thy Father's kingdom! Thou shalt turn this water of our earthly affliction into that wine of gladness, wherewith our souls shall be satiated for ever. "Make haste, O my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."—BP. HALL.

HYMN.

Where two or three together meet,
To seek the Lord by pray'r,
The Lord is in the midst of these,
And he will surely hear.

Shine, Lord, on every soul that comes
By pray'r to seek thy face;
Thou know'st our hope, our only hope,
Is grounded on thy grace.

Help us, O Lord! to ask in faith;
Take unbelief away,
And for the blessings that we need
Give us a heart to pray.

§ CCXXXVII.

CHAP. II. 13—25.

Christ departeth into Capernaum, and to Jerusalem, where he purgeth the temple of buyers and sellers. He foretelleth his death and resurrection. Many believed because of his miracles, but he would not trust himself with them.

13 ¶ 'And the Jews' pass-over was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14 ^a And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting :

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen ; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables ;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence ; make not 'my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, ^m The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, ⁿ What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things ?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, ^o Destroy this temple,

and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days ?

21 But he spake ^p of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, ^q his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them ; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man : for ^r he knew what was in man.

^f Ex. xii. 14. Deut. xvi. 1, 16. ver. 23. ch. v. 1; & vi. 4; & xi. 55.—^g Mat. xxi. 12. Mark xi. 15. Luke xix. 45.—^h Luke ii. 49.—ⁱ Ps. lxxix. 9.—^j Mat. xii. 28. ch. vi. 30.—^k Mat. xxvi. 61; & xxvii. 40. Mark xiv. 58; & xv. 29.—^l Col. ii. 9. Heb. viii. 2. So 1 Cor. iii. 16; & vi. 19. ^m 1 Cor. vi. 16.—ⁿ Luke xix. 8.—^o 1 Sam. xii. 7. 1 Chr. xviii. 9. Mat. ix. 4. Mark ii. 8. ch. vi. 64; & xvi. 20. Acts i. 24. Rev. ii. 21.

READER.—Jesus found in the temple those that sold oxen, &c. See Commentary on Matthew XXI. 12, 13, in § LXVII.

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.—Christ conquered all his sufferings by his own power. As in his passion, when he suffered, he bowed down his head, and gave up the ghost with a loud

voice, to note that his sufferings were voluntary, John xix. 30; so in his resurrection, he is said to lift up his head himself, to note that he had life in himself, that he was the Prince of life, and that it was impossible for him to be held under by death, as we were by the law, Rom. vii. 6. And that his exaltation was voluntary likewise, and from his own power, for he was not to have any assistance in the work of our redemption, but do all alone, John ii. 19; v. 26; x. 17. If it be objected, that Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of his Father, and that he raised him up, Rom. vi. 4; to this I answer, that this was not by way of supplement and succour, to make up any defect of power in Christ; but only by way of consent to Christ's own power and action, that so men might jointly honour the Son and the Father, John v. 19, 23. Or, by the glory of the Father we may understand that glorious power which the Father gave unto his Son in the flesh, to have life in himself, John v. 26; annexing thereunto a command to exercise the same power, John x. 18. Or, he is said to be raised by himself and his Father both, because the Holy Spirit which immediately quickened him, was both his and his Father's; Rom. i. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16. It was not any personal thing wherein the Son differed from the Father, which raised Jesus from the dead, but that Spirit which was common to them both.—**BR. REYNOLDS.**

Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

—And these certainly are, in all reason, sufficient to convince any man; for none could do so many and such miracles as these, but the eternal Son of God himself, of the same essence and power with the Father, the Creator and governor of all things. As for the number, they were more than any one, or all the prophets had done before. Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, are recorded to have done most, but all theirs put together were not so many as he did in three years and a little more; much less were they like to his, or any way comparable to them. Many of theirs were works of judgment, his were all works of mercy and goodness all for the good and benefit of mankind, not so much as one to the prejudice of any. We do not read of any distemper, except Naaman's leprosy, cured by the prophets; but there was no sort of distemper but what he cured. None of the prophets ever cast out devils, but no devil could stand before Christ; not a whole legion of them together, Mark v. 9; whereby he showed his power over hell itself, which none ever had but God. The like power he showed also over the water, by turning it into wine, by walking upon it, and disposing of the fishes in it, as he pleased: over the air, by laying the winds and storms: over the fruit of the earth, by making five barley loaves satisfy above five thousand people: over the plants and trees, by causing the fig tree to wither: over men's bodies, by healing all diseases they were subject to: over men's wills by in-

ST. JOHN III. 1—15.

clining the apostles to come at his call, and the owner of the ass to send her to him, upon his sending for her: to which we may also add, the people's going out of the temple, upon his driving, without any civil authority, Matt. xxi. 12. And he showed his power over death itself, by raising the dead to life. Indeed, he plainly showed, that he had both perfect knowledge of, and absolute power over, all things that are: nothing came amiss to him, nothing was too hard for him; nor one thing harder than another; all things were alike easy to him; he cured the man that was born blind, as easily as if he had been but newly made so. But as the man himself said, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind;" John ix, 32. No mere man ever did, or could do it; none but Almighty God himself: but Christ did it, and by that and all his other works demonstrated himself to be Almighty; that he could do whatsoever he would; which is the great prerogative of God, incommunicable to any creature. Wherefore, as the Samaritans believed in him, because he had told the woman all that she ever did, John iv. 39; and the disciples, because he knew all things, John xvi. 30; how much more cause have we to believe him to be the Almighty God, the great Creator and governor of the world, seeing he did not only know all things, but could do all things, and alter the course of nature whensoever he pleased!—**BP. BEVERIDGE.**

HYMN.

Oh! for the eye of faith divine
To pierce beyond the grave;
To see that Friend and call him mine
Whose arm is strong to save.

Behold my glorious leader nigh;
My Lord, my Saviour lives;
Before him death's pale terrors fly,
And my faint heart revives.

Lord, I commit my soul to Thee;
Accept the sacred trust;
Receive this nobler part of me,
And watch the sleeping dust;—

Till Thou shalt in thy glory come,
When all thy saints shall rise,
And, cloth'd in full immortal bloom,
Attend Thee to the skies.

STEELE.

§ CCXXXVIII.

CHAP. III. 1—15.

Christ teacheth Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration. Of faith in his death.

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for ^o no man can do these miracles that thou doest except ^e God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ^e Except a man be born ^l again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whether it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascen-

ded up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

a ch. vii. 50; & xix. 30.—d ch. ix. 16. 33. Acts ii. 22.—e Acts x. 38.—f ch. i. 13. Gal. vi. 15. Tit. iii. 5. Jam. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23. 1 John iii. ix.—g Or, from above.—h Mark xvi. 16. Acts ii. 38.—i Or, from above.—f Eccles. xi. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 11.—g ch. vi. 32, 60.—h Mat. xi. 27. ch. i. 18; & vii. 16; & viii. 28; & xii. 49; & xiv. 24.—i ver. 32. & Prov. xxx. iv. ch. vi. 33, 38, 51, 62; & xvi. 28. Acts ii. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 47. Eph. iv. 9, 10.—j Num. xxi. 9.—k ch. viii. 28; & xii. 32.—aver. 36. ch. vi. 47.

READER. — *Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.*—God had seven thousand in Israel, when Elias thought none but himself had been left: all are not alike venturous or confident of their strength. Nicodemus came to Christ by night, and even then Christ did not reject him. Therefore, we must not presently censure our neighbours as cold or dead, if they discover not immediately the same measure of courage and public stoutness in the profession of Christ with ourselves. Some men are by nature more retired, silent, unsociable, inactive men: some by the engagement of their places, persons and callings, wherein they are of more public and necessary use in the church, are put upon more abundant caution and circumspection in the moderate carriage of themselves than other men. Paul was of himself very zealous and earnest in that great confusion, when Gaius and Aristarchus were

ST. JOHN III. 1—15.

dragged into the theatre, to have gone in unto the people in that their outrage and distemper: but the wisdom of the disciples and some of his chief friends is herein commended, that they sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure into the theatre, and that they suffered him not. Acts xix. 30, 31.

—BISHOP REYNOLDS.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again.—

Conversion is another kind of work, than most are aware of. It is not a small matter to bring an earthly mind to heaven, and to show a man the amiable excellencies of God, till he be taken up in such love to him, that never can be quenched; to break the heart for sin, and make him flee for refuge unto Christ, and thankfully embrace him as the life of his soul; to have the very drift and bent of the heart and life to be changed, so that a man renounces that which he took for his felicity, and places his felicity where he never did before; and lives not to the same end, and drives not on the same design in the world, as formerly he did. In a word, he that "is in Christ, is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." 2 Cor. v. 17. He has a new understanding, a new will and resolution, new sorrows, and desires, and love, and delight; new thoughts, new speeches, new company if possible and a new conversation. Sin that before was a jesting matter with him, is now so odious

658

and terrible to him, that he flies from it as from death, the world that was so lovely in his eyes, doth now appear but as vanity and vexation. God who was before neglected, is now the only happiness of his soul; before, he was forgotten, and every lust preferred before him; but now he is set next the heart, and all things must give place to him; and the heart is taken up in the attendance and observance of him, and is grieved when he hides his face, and and never thinks itself well without him. Christ himself, who was wont to be slightly thought of, is now his only hope and refuge, and he lives upon him as on his daily bread; he cannot pray without him, nor rejoice without him, nor think, nor speak, nor live without him. Heaven itself, that before was looked upon but as a tolerable reserve, which he hoped might serve his turn as better than hell, when he could not stay any longer in the world, is now taken for his home, the place of his only hope and rest, where he shall see, and love, and praise that God who hath his heart already. Hell, that before did seem but as a bugbear to frighten men from sin, doth now appear to be a real misery, that is not to be ventured on, nor jested with. The works of holiness which before he was weary of, and seemed to be more ado than needs, are now both his recreation and his business, and the trade that he lives upon. The Bible which was before to him but almost as a common book, is now as the law of God, as a letter written

ST. JOHN III. 1—15.

to him from heaven, and subscribed with the name of the Eternal Majesty; it is the rule of his thoughts, and words and deeds; the commands are binding, the threats are dreadful, and the promises of it speak life to his soul. The godly who seemed to him but like other men, are now the most excellent and happy on earth. And the wicked that were his play-fellows, are now his grief; and he that could laugh at their sin, is readier now to weep for their sin and misery; Ps. xvi. 3; & xv. 4. Phil. iii. 18. In short, he hath a new end in his thoughts, and a new way in his endeavours, and therefore his heart and life is new. Before, his carnal self was his end; and his pleasure and worldly profits and credit were his way; and now, God and everlasting glory is his end; and Christ is the Spirit, and word and ordinances, holiness to God, and righteousness and mercy to men, these are his way. Before, self was the chief ruler, to which the matters of God and conscience must stoop and give place; and now God in Christ, by the Spirit, word, and ministry is the chief ruler, to whom both self, and all the matters of self, must give place. So, that this is not a change in one or two, or twenty points; but in the whole soul; and the very end and bent of the conservation. A man may step out of one path into another, and yet have his face the same way, and be still going towards the same place; but it is another matter to turn quite back again, and take his journey the clean contrary way; to

a contrary place. So it is here, a man may turn from drunkenness to thriftiness, and forsake his good fellowship, and other gross, disgraceful sins, and set upon some duties of religion, and yet be going still to the same end as before, intending his carnal self above all, and giving it still the government of his soul. But when he is converted, this self is denied and taken down, and God is set up, and his face is turned the contrary way; and he that before was addicted to himself, and lived to himself, is now by sanctification devoted to God, and liveth unto God. Before, he asked himself what he should do with his time, his parts, and his estate, and for himself he used them; but now he asketh God what he shall do with them, and he uses them for him. Before, he would please God, so far as might stand with the pleasure of his flesh, and carnal self, but not to any great displeasure of them. But now, he will please God, let flesh and self be ever so much displeased. This is the great change that God will make upon all who shall be saved.—
BAXTER.

*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.—*The greatest part of mankind hear this subject as a story. Some are a little moved with the present sound of it, but they draw it not home into their hearts, to make it theirs, and to find salvation in it, but still cleave to sin, and love sin

better, than him who suffered for it. But you whose hearts the Lord hath deeply humbled under a sense of sin, come to this depth of consolation, and try it, that you may have experience of the sweetness and riches of it. Study this point thoroughly, and you will find it answer all, and quiet your consciences. Apply this "bearing of sin" by the Lord Jesus for you, for it is published and made known to you for this purpose. This is the genuine and true use of it, as of the brazen serpent, not that the people might emptily gaze on the fabric of it, but that those that looked on it might be cured. When all that can be said, is said against you, "it is true," may you say, "but it is all satisfied, for he on whom I rest made it his, and did bear it for me." The person of Christ is of more worth than all men, yea, than all the creatures, and therefore, his life was a full ransom for the greatest offender. And as for outward troubles and sufferings, which were the occasion of this doctrine in this place, they are all made exceeding light by the removal of this great pressure. Let the Lord lay on me what he will, seeing he hath taken off my sin, and laid that on his own Son in my stead. I may suffer many things, but he hath borne that for me, which alone was able to make me miserable. And you that have this persuasion, how will your hearts be taken up with his love, "who has so loved you, as to give himself for you?" who interposed himself, to bear off from you, the stroke of everlasting death, and encountered all the wrath

due to us, and went through with that great work, by reason of his unspeakable love? let him never go forth from my heart, who for my sake refused to go down from the cross.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us, thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us, with thy salvation,
Enter every waiting heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy grace receive;
Suddenly return—and never,
Never more thy temple leave:
Thee may we be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray and praise thee without ceasing,
Triumph in redeeming love.

Finish them thy new creation;
Pure, unspotted may we be,
Let us see our full salvation,
Perfectly secur'd in thee:
Chang'd from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place:
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

WESLEY.

§ CCXXXIX.

CHAP III. 16—36.

The great love of God towards the world. Condemnation for unbelief. The baptism, witness, and doctrine of John concerning Christ.

16 ¶ ° For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 ' For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 ¶ ' He that believeth on him is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, ' that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For ' every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be ' reprov'd.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa ; and there he tarried with them, ' and baptized.

23 ¶ And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to ' Salim, because there was much water there : ' and they came and were baptized.

24 For ' John was not yet cast into prison.

25 ¶ Then there arose a

question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, ' to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

27 John answered and said, ' A man can ' receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ' I am not the Christ, but ' that I am sent before him.

29 ' He that hath the bride is the bridegroom : but ' the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice : this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

31 ' He that cometh from above ' is above all : ' he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : ' he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And ' what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth ; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his

testimony 'hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 " For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God : for God giveth not the Spirit " by measure *unto him*.

35 ° The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 ʳ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

o Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 9.—p Luke ix 56. ch. v. 46; & viii. 15; & xii. 47. 1 John iv. 14.—q ch. v. 24; & vi. 40, 47; & xx. 31.—r ch. i. 4, 9, 10, 11: & viii. 12.—s Job. xxiv. 13, 17. Eph. v. 13.—t Or, *discovered*.—u ch. iv. 2.—v 1 Sam. ix. 4.—w Mat. iii. 5, 6.—y Mat. xiv. 3.—z ch. i. 7, 15, 27, 34.—a 1 Cor. iv. 7. Heb. v. 4. Jam. i. 17.—b Or, *take unto himself*.—c ch. i. 20, 27.—d Mal. iii. 1. Mark i. 2. Luke i. 17.—e Mat. xxii. 2. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 25, 27. Rev. xxi. 9.—f Cant. v. 1.—g ver. 13. ch. viii. 23.—h Mat. xxviii. 18. ch. i. 15, 27. Rom. ix. 5.—i 1 Cor. xv. 47.—j ch. vi. 33. 1 Cor. xv. 47. Eph. i. 21. Phil. ii. 9.—k ver. 11. ch. viii. 36; & xv. 15.—l Rom. iii. 4. 1 John v. 10.—m ch. vii. 16.—n ch. i. 16.—o Mat. xi. 27; & xxviii. 18. Luke x. 22. ch. v. 20, 22; & xiii. 3; & xvii. 2. Heb. ii. 8.—p Hab. ii. 4. ch. i. 12; & vi. 47. ver. 15, 16. Rom. i. 17. 1 John v. 10.

READER.—*God so loved the world, &c.*—We ought to value the love of God by the price of our redemption ; and we shall still have more reason to do so, when we consider,

The extent of this love of God, in sending his Son into the world. And indeed the Holy Scriptures are very plain and express as to this matter:—"God" (saith St. John iii. 17,) "so loved the world, that he sent his Son, that the world through him might be saved." And that God was no respecter of persons in thus loving the world, we are assured in another Sacred Scripture, (1 Tim. ii. 4,) His will is that *all* men should be saved. And St. Peter affirms,

662

that even such as perish, through their own wilful disobedience, are of the number of those whom Jesus Christ came to save. "They denied the Lord that bought them:" that *bought*, and would have saved them, but they brought upon themselves destruction. Nay ; to take away all manner of scruple, and to apply this most comfortable truth to the consciences of sinners, who are apt to fear the worst. St. Paul (Rom. v.) speaks of this after a most convincing manner:—As the sin of Adam (saith he) affected all his posterity ; as by one offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so the merits of Christ were designed to redeem *all* the posterity of Adam ; for "by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." As sure, therefore, as I am one of those who by the sin of Adam am become weak, corrupt, and wicked, so sure am I redeemed by Jesus Christ. And the sin, that does so easily beset me, directs me to Him who came into the world to save me. This was the doctrine of Christ, and this he taught by his example. The very persons who crucified him, had an interest in the sufferings they made him to undergo ; otherwise he would not have prayed for them that God would forgive them. St. Stephen followed his Master's example, and prayed for his murderers ; and the Church of Christ still continues to pray for Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, holding *this truth*,—that the Love of God, and the merits of Jesus Christ, extend to all

men who lay hold of the mercy; "That whoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life." And by this charitable practice, our church endeavours to bring all her people to a god-like temper of charity and good-will for all who bear the image of God; and by this practice she endeavours to support the spirits of dejected penitents, who will have no reason to despair, since the greatest sinners are in a capacity of salvation.

We are obliged, indeed, to say, in a capacity to be saved; for the truth is, all men are not saved, that might be saved, if it were not for their own wilful blindness, resisting the Love and the Counsel of God for their good. Many will not hear and be made sensible of the danger they are in; others will not forsake their sins for any consideration whatever; and many even despise the very offers of pardon and grace. In all these cases the Saviour of the world declares, that it is men's own fault if they are not saved. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." John v. 40.

If people, when salvation is offered to them, will, notwithstanding, unworthily abuse the mercy; if men, to whom God has manifested himself, *will not* retain God in their knowledge; if those that have been enlightened, and have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; if they are again entangled therein, and are finally lost; this is not for want of means to be saved, but they will not be saved;

they will not seriously attend to the word preached; they will not believe, at least, they will not consider, the importance of a judgment to come; nor will they submit to the conditions of attaining eternal happiness. But then, it must not be said,—that God did not love them; that God did not desire their welfare; who has declared his Son to be the Saviour, not of some few only, but of the whole world. And therefore, the account of his birth, is said by the Angels, to be tidings of great joy to all people; i. e. all that can be prevailed upon, by the goodness of God, by the love of Christ, by the labours of his Ministers, to receive him for their Lord and Saviour.

And now we come, in the third and last particular, to consider,

What obligations this love of God lays upon Christians. For certainly, God did not design that all this love should be lost upon us. He expects some return, some fruits of his Son's humiliations, and labours, and sufferings.

Shall I put you in mind how God, by the prophet Isaiah, (ch. v.) reasoned with the people of Israel? "Judge," saith he, "I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard." The case was so plain, that he refers it to themselves; "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Now the punishment of this ingratitude, this unfruitfulness, followeth: "I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten

up, trodden down, laid waste." And so it came to pass. You can any of you apply this, as well as I. To proceed, therefore; The Love of God, in sending his Son into the world, obliges us to three things especially. First, to love the Father, who sent his Son that we might live through him. Secondly, to love our Lord Jesus Christ, who condescended to come down to save us. And thirdly, to love all mankind, for whose sakes, as well as for ours, he came down from Heaven.—WILSON.

Ye yourselves, bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. See Commentary on Luke III. 16, in § CLXI.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.—Although all men are condemned for the unbelief of their first parents, yet our most merciful Creator hath so ordered it, that none suffer, but for their own personal unbelief; the sentence being never executed, but only upon those who are guilty of it themselves, in their own proper persons, as well as in their common head: for the same day on which the first Adam fell by his not believing the word of God, God was pleased to raise up another Adam, his only begotten Son, his own eternal Word, "that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. So that as unbelief was the occasion of our fall and destruction in the first Adam, faith is now made the condition of our rise and salva-

tion by the second. And, therefore no man can now perish, but by reason of his own unbelief; because he will not believe in the Son of God, nor in what God hath said concerning him; for if he doeth that, he hath God's word for it that he shall not perish, as Adam had it, that he should die if he ate of the forbidden fruit. There is only this difference between them, that God spake to Adam by way of threatening, he speaks to us by way of promise; but both are equally the word of God; and we have the same ground to believe what he hath promised to us in Christ, as Adam had to believe what he had threatened to him; or rather, if possible, more; forasmuch as the threatening was only by the word spoken, the promise is by the Word incarnate: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," John i. 14, in our own nature, united to his Divine person. And if we do but rightly believe in this word, we shall as certainly be saved by him, as we were condemned by our unbelief in the first man.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

Not to condemn the sons of men,
Did Christ the Son of God appear;
No weapons in his hands are seen,
No flaming sword, nor thunder there.

Such was the pity of our God,
He lov'd the race of men so well,
He sent His Son to bear our load
Of sin, and save our souls from hell.

Sinners believe the Saviour's word,
Trust in his mighty name and live;
A thousand joys his lips afford,
His hands a thousand blessings give.

§ CCXL.

CHAP. IV. 1—26.

Christ talketh with a woman of Samaria, and revealeth himself unto her.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and ^a baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground ^b that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a wo-

4 P

man of Samaria? for ^c the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee ^d living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But ^e whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, ^f shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 ^g The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and

said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband :

18 For thou hast had five husbands ; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, ^a I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in ⁱ this mountain ; and ye say, that in ^a Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, ⁱ when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ^m ye know not what : we know what we worship : for ^s salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in ^s spirit ^r and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 ^s God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ : when he is come, ⁱ he will tell us all things.

666

26 Jesus saith unto her, ⁱ that speak unto thee am he.

^a ch. iii. 22, 26.—^b Gen. xxiii. 19 ; & xlviii. 22. Josh. xxiv. 32.—^c 2 Kings xvii. 24. Luke ix. 32, 33. Acts x. 29.—^d Is. xli. 3 ; & xlv. 3. Jer. ii. 18. Zech. xiii. 1 ; & xiv. 8.—^e ch. vi. 35, 36.—^f ch. vii. 28.—^g See ch. vi. 34 ; & xvii. 2, 3. Rom. vi. 23. 1 John v. 20.—^h Luke vii. 16 ; & xxiv. 19. ch. vi. 14 ; & vii. 40.—ⁱ Judg. ix. 7.—^j Deut. xli. 5, 11. 1 Kin. ix. 3 2 Chron. vii. 12.—^k Mal. i. 11. 1 Tim. ii. 8.—^l 2 Kings xvii. 29.—^m Is. li. 3. Luke xxiv. 47. Rom. ix. 4, 5.—ⁿ Phil. iii. 3.—^o ch. i. 17.—^p 2 Cor. iii. 17.—^q ver. 29, 30.—^r ch. ix. 37. Mat. xxvi. 63, 64. Mark xiv. 61, 62.

READER.—*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*—The spirit is compared to water, and that not a little measure to sprinkle or bedew, but to baptize the faithful in, Mat. iii. 11. Acts i. 5 ; and that not in a font or vessel which grows less and less, but in a springing or living river, John vii. 39. Now water, besides its purifying property, is of a spreading nature : it hath no bounds nor limits to itself, as firm and solid bodies have, but receives its restraint by the vessel or continent which holds it : so the Spirit of the Lord is not straitened in himself, but only by the narrow hearts of men into which he comes. "Ye are not straitened," saith the Apostle, "in us ;" that is, in that ministry of grace and dispensation of the Spirit which is committed to us, "but in your own bowels," which are not in any proportion enlarged unto that abundance and fulness of heavenly grace, which, in the gospel of salvation, is offered unto you. Spring water is a growing and multiplying thing ; which is the reason why rivers which rise from narrow fountains, have yet, by reason of a constant and regular supply, a great

breadth in remote channels, because the water lives: whereas in pits and torrents it groweth less and less: so the graces of the Spirit are living and springing things; the longer they continue, the larger they grow, like the waters of the Sanctuary, Ezek. xxxvi. 25; and the reason is, because they come from a fountain which is all life, John iv. 10; xiv. 6. Col. iii. 4. Again, as water multiplies in itself, so, by insinuation and mollification, it hath a fructifying virtue in other things. Fruitful trees are planted by the water's side; so the Spirit, searching and mollifying the heart, maketh it fruitful in holy obedience, Ezek. xi. 19, 20. Water is very strong in its own stream; we see what mighty engines it moveth, what huge vessels it rolleth like a ball, and what walls and bulwarks it overthroweth: so the Spirit of God is able to beat down all strong holds which the wit of man, or the malice of Satan can erect against the Church. And this strength of water serves to carry it as high as its own spring and level: so the Spirit, will never cease to raise the hearts of his people, till it carries them to their fountain and spring-head in heaven.—**BR. REYNOLDS.**

God is a Spirit.—Seeing all the happiness that mankind is capable of, consisteth in the enjoyment of that supreme and all-glorious Being whom we call God; and seeing we can never enjoy him unless we first serve him, nor serve him, unless we first know him; hence it necessarily follows, that as ever we desire to be truly happy, our first and great care

must be to know God, not only so as to acknowledge him to be, but so as to have a due sense, and right and clear apprehensions of him, and of those infinite perfections that are centered in him: for it is only such a knowledge of God as this, that will incline our affections to him, and put us upon constant and sincere endeavours so to serve him here, that we may enjoy him for ever. But this we can never attain to without consulting those Divine oracles, wherein this Almighty Being hath been pleased to make known himself, and to discover his perfections to us. I shall, therefore, endeavour, at this time, to show what kind of thoughts, and conceptions we ought to frame in our minds concerning the Most High God, and what influence they will have upon our lives and actions.

But where shall I begin to speak of him who had no beginning at all, and will have no end? And what words can I take upon myself whereby to express his glory, who infinitely surpasseth all expressions whatsoever? All expressions, did I say? yea, and conceptions too: for his nature is so pure, his goodness so great, his knowledge so transcendent, his power so boundless, his wisdom, justice, and mercy so mysterious, his glory so incomprehensible, and all his perfections so high, so infinitely high, that our highest conceptions of him are still infinitely below him. And, therefore, when he would make known himself to us in his Holy Scriptures, he is pleased to condescend to our capacities, so as to fit

ST. JOHN IV. 1—26.

his expressions to our weak apprehensions : not speaking of himself as he is in himself, for then we should not be able to apprehend what he meant ; but as a nurse to a child, who utters not her mind in complete sentences, but lisps it out in broken language as fitted to the shallow capacity of its tender years ; even so doth the great God speak to us in such language as we are best able to understand : sometimes making use of the names that we give to the several parts of our bodies, and the passions of our minds, to signify those infinite perfections that are in him, or the effects of them unto us. Thus he useth the word eye, to signify his Omniscience, because the eye is that part of the body whereby we see ; and the word hand, to express his power, because it is by that we act. Thus also he useth the words rejoicing, grieving, loving, hating, respecting, and the like, to denote something in him which we cannot so well comprehend as by the dark resemblance which these passions in us, have of it.

Let us call in all our scattered thoughts from all things here below, and raise them up, and unite them all upon the most high God, apprehending him not under the idea, image, or likeness of anything else, but as infinitely greater and higher, and better than all things : as One existing in and of himself, and giving essence and existence to all things in the world besides himself : as One so pure and simple that there is nothing in him but himself, but essence and being itself : as One so

infinite and omnipotent, that whatsoever anything else is in the whole world, there He is, and beyond the world, where nothing else is, there all things are, because He is there : as One so wise, so knowing, so omniscient, that He at this very moment, and always, sees what all the angels are doing in heaven ; what all the fowls are doing in the air ; what all the fishes are doing in the waters ; what all the devils are doing in hell ; what all the men, and beasts, and the very insects are doing upon earth ; and what we in particular are now doing here : as One so powerful, so omnipotent, that he can do whatsoever he will, only by willing it should be done : as One so great, so good, so glorious, so immutable, so transcendent, so infinite, so incomprehensible, so eternal,— what shall I say ! so Jehovah, that the more we think of him, the more we admire him, the more we adore him, the more we love him, the more we may and ought ; our highest conceptions of him being as much beneath him as our greatest services come short of what we owe him.

Seeing, therefore, we cannot think of God so highly as he is, let us think of him as highly as we can : and for that end let us get above ourselves, and above the world, and raise up our thoughts higher and higher, and higher still ; and when we have got them up as high as possibly we can, let us apprehend a Being infinitely higher than the highest of them ; and then, finding ourselves at a loss, amazed, con-

ST. JOHN IV. 1—26.

founded at such an infinite height of infinite perfections, let us fall down in humble and hearty desires to be freed from these dark prisons wherein we are now immured; that we may take our flight into eternity, and by the merits and mediation of the ever blessed Jesus, mount up to the highest heavens, and there see this infinite Being "face to face," and enjoy him for ever.

In the meanwhile let us of the Church militant here on earth, join with the church triumphant in heaven, in praising and magnifying his great and glorious name, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come: the whole earth is full of his glory. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Amen, Hallelujah; blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, to our God, the great, the all-wise almighty, everlasting God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one Jehovah for ever and ever.—BEVERIDGE.

And they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.—The solemn visible sacrifices, when instituted by the command of Him, the great invisible, are to be presented by every pious person with all humble and obedient regard: yet the chief labour is to be employed on the pure, sublime worship and obedience of the mind. The heathen philosophers objected to the primitive Christians, that they did not

sacrifice; to which some of the early apologists reply thus, "The former and parent of the whole universe has no need of incense and of blood." The greatest sacrifice we can present to him, is to know who has stretched out the heavens, who has laid the foundations of the earth, who has gathered together the waters into the hollow of the sea, and divided the light from the darkness, formed the animal world and the human species, and who governs them all by his nod, and that acknowledging him such an immense and omnipotent being, we should lift up pure and holy hands to him.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

God is a Spirit, just and wise;
He sees our inmost mind;
In vain to heaven we raise our cries,
And leave our souls behind.

In spirit and in truth alone
We must present our pray'r;
The formal and the false are known,
Through the disguise they wear.

Their lifted eyes salute the skies,
Their bended knees the ground;
But God abhors the sacrifice
Where not the heart is found.

Through Christ we come before thy face,
And find acceptance there;
Lord search our thoughts and try our ways,
And make our souls sincere.

WATTS.

§ CCXLI.

CHAP. IV. 27—54.

Christ's disciples marvel. He declareth to them his zeal to God's glory. Many Samaritans believe on Him. He departeth into Galilee; and healeth the ruler's son that lay sick at Capernaum.

27 ¶ And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man, 'which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 ¶ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; 'for they are white already to harvest.

36 'And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him 'for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word;

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for 'we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

43 ¶ Now after two days

he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

44 For ⁶ Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received him, ⁶ having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: ⁶ for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, ⁶ where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, ⁶ Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This is again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judæa into Galilee.

1 ver. 26.—^u Job xxiii. 12. ch. vi. 38; & xvii. 4; & xix. 30.—^v Mat. ix. 37. Luke x. 2.—^w Dan. xii. 3.—^x ver. 29.—^y ch. xvii. 8. 1 Jobu iv. 14.—^z Mat. xiii. 87. Mark vi. 4. Luke iv. 24.—^a ch. ii. 23; & iii. 2.—^b Deut. xvi. 16. ^c ch. ii. 1, ii. 10, *courtesy, or, ruler.* 1 Cor. i. 22.

READER.—*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* This affords abundant matter both to humble and to comfort the Church of Christ. To humble us in the evidence of our disabilities; for if we could have finished the works which were given us to do, there would have been no need of Christ. It was weakness which made way for Christ: our weakness to fulfil obedience, and that weakness of the law to justify sinners, Rom. v. 6; viii. 8; Heb. vii. 18, 19. All the strength we have is by the power of his might, and by his grace, Eph. vi. 10; 2 Tim. ii. 1. And even this, God dispenseth unto us in measure and by degrees, driving out our corruptions as he did the Canaanites before his people by little and little, Exod. xxiii. 80. Because while we

are here, he will have us live by faith and draw our strength as we use it, from Christ, and wait in hope of a better condition.

To comfort us likewise: (1.) Against all our unavoidable and invincible infirmities. Every good Christian desires to serve the Lord with all his strength; desires to be enriched, to be steadfast, immoveable, abounding in the work of the Lord; to do his will as the angels in heaven do it. Yet in many things he fails, and has daily experience of his own defects. But here is all the comfort, though I am not able to do any of my duties as I should, yet Christ hath finished all his to the full: and therefore, though I am compassed with infirmities, so that I cannot do the things which I would, yet I have a compassionate Advocate with the Father who both giveth and craveth pardon for every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord, though he be not perfectly cleansed. 1 John ii. 2; 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

(2.) Against the pertinacity and close adherence of our corruptions, which cleave as fast unto us, as the very powers and faculties of our soul; as heat unto fire, or light unto the sun. Yet sure we are, that He who forbad the fire to burn, and put blackness upon the face of the sun at mid-day, is able likewise to remove our corruptions as far from us as he hath removed them from his own sight. And the ground of our expectation hereof is this: Christ, when he was upon the earth, in the form of a servant, accomplished all the offices of suffering and obe-

dience for us; therefore, being now exalted far above all heavens, at the right hand of Majesty and Glory, he will much more fulfil those offices of power which he hath there to do: which are, by the supplies of his Spirit, to purge us from sin; by the sufficiency of his grace to strengthen us, by his Word to sanctify and cleanse us, and to present us to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle. He that brought from the dead the Lord Jesus, and suffered not death to hold the Head, is able, by that power, and for that reason, to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, and not to suffer corruption for ever to hold the members.—**BR. REYNOLDS.**

The will of God is the strongest and most binding reason that can be used to a Christian mind, which hath resigned itself to be governed by that rule, to have the "will of God" for its law. Whatsoever is required upon that warrant, it cannot refuse. Although it cross a man's own humour, or his private interest, yet if his heart be subjected to the will of God, he will not stand with him in anything. One word from God, "I will have it so," silences all, and carries it against all opposition.

It were a great point, if we could be persuaded to esteem duly of this: it were indeed all. It would make light and easy work in those things that go so hardly on with us, though we are daily exhorted to them. Is it the will of God that I should live soberly? Then, though my own corrupt will and my companions be against it, yet it must be so. Wills

ST. JOHN IV. 27—54.

he that I forbear cursing and oaths, though it is my custom to use them? Yet I must offer violence to my custom, and go against the stream of all their customs that are round me, to obey his will, who wills all things justly and holily. Will he have my charity not only liberal in giving, but in forgiving, and real and hearty in both? Will he have me "bless them that curse me, and do good to them that hate me, and love mine enemies?" Though the world counts it a hard task, and my own corrupt heart possibly finds it so, yet it shall be done; and not as upon unpleasant necessity, but willingly and cheerfully, and with the more delight because it is difficult; for so it proves my obedience more, and my love to him whose will it is. Though mine enemies deserve not my love, yet he who bids me love them does; and if he will have this touchstone to try the uprightness of my love to him, shall it fail there? No; his will commands me so absolutely, and he himself is so lovely, that there can be nobody so unlovely in themselves, or to me, but I can love them upon his command, and for his sake.—LEIGHTON.

Go thy way, thy son liveth.—The rulers request was, "Come and heal:" Christ's answer was, "Go thy way, thy son lives." Our merciful Saviour meets those in the end, whom he crosses in the way. How sweetly doth he correct our prayers, and, while he doth not give us what we ask, gives us better than we asked!

Justly doth he forbear to go down

with this ruler, lest he should confirm him in an opinion of measuring his power by conceits of locality and distance: but he doth that in absence, for which his presence was required, with a repulse: "Thy son liveth," giving a greater demonstration of his Omnipotency than was craved. How oft doth he not hear us to our will, that he may hear us to our advantage! The chosen vessel would be rid of temptations; he hears of a supply of grace: the sick man asks relief, receives patience; life, and receives glory. Let us ask what we think best; let him give what he knows best.

With one word doth Christ heal two patients, the son and the father; the son's fever, and the father's unbelief. That operative word of our Saviour was not without the intention of a trial. Had not the ruler gone home satisfied with that intimation of his son's life and recovery, neither of them had been blessed with success. Now the news of performance meets him one half of the way: and he that believed somewhat ere he came, and more when he went, grew to more faith in the way; and, when he came home, enlarged his faith to all the skirts of his family. A weak faith may be true, but a true faith is growing: he that boasts of a full stature in the first moment of his assent, may presume, but doth not believe.

Great men cannot want clients; their example sways some, their authority more; they cannot go to either of the other worlds alone.

ST. JOHN V. 1—23.

In vain do they pretend power over others, who labour not to draw their families unto God.—BP. HALL.

HYMN.

O Lord, whate'er is felt or fear'd,
This thought is our repose,
That He by whom this frame was rear'd
Its various weakness knows.

Thou view'st us with a pitying eye,
While struggling with our load;
In pains and dangers Thou art nigh,
Our Father and our God.

Supported by our Saviour's love,
We tend to realms of peace,
Where ev'ry pain shall far remove,
And ev'ry frailty cease.

§ CCXLII.

CHAP. V. 1—23.

Jesus on the Sabbath day cureth him that was diseased eight and thirty years. The Jews therefore cavil, and persecute him for it. He answereth for himself.

AFTER ^othis there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem ^oby the sheep [']market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water:

whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, ^oRise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and ^oon the same day was the sabbath.

10 ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: ^oit is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed

wist not who it was : for Jesus had conveyed himself away, 'a multitude being in *that* place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole : 'sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

17 ¶ But Jesus answered them, ' My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews 'sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, 'making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For 'the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all

things that himself doeth : and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them* ; " even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but " hath committed all judgment unto the Son :

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. ° He that honoureth not the Son honour-eth not the Father which hath sent him.

a 1. ev. xxiii. 2.—Deut. xvi. 1 ch. ii. 13.—d Neh. iii. 1; & xii. 39.—l Or, gate.—e Mat ix 6. Mark ii. xi. Luke v. 24.—f ch. ix. 14.—g Ex. xx. 10. Neh. xiii. 19. Jer. xvii. 21, &c. Mat. xii. 2. Mark ii. 24; & iii. 4. Luke vi. 2; & xiii. 14.—| Or, from the multitude that was.—f Mat. xii. 46. ch. viii. 11.—g ch. ix. 4; & xiv. 10.—h ch. vii. 19.—i ch. x. 30, 35. Phil. ii. 6.—k ver. 30. ch. viii. 28; & ix. 4; & xii. 49; & xiv. 10.—l Mat. iii. 17. ch. iii. 5. 2 Pet. i. 17.—m Luke vii. 14; & viii. liv. ch. xi. 25. 43.—n Mat. xi. 27; & xviii. 18. ver. 27. ch. iii. 35; & xvii. 2. Acts xvii. 31. 1 Pet. iv. 5.—o 1 John ii. 23.

READER.—O all ye that are spiritually sick and diseased, come to the pool of Bethesda, the blood of Christ! Do ye complain of the blindness of your ignorance? here ye shall receive clearness of sight : of the distemper of passions? here ease : of the superfluity of your sinful passions? here evacuation : of the impotency of your obedience? here integrity : of the dead witheredness of good affections? here life and vigour. Whatsoever your infirmity be, come to the pool of Bethesda, and be healed.—HALL.

Behold thou art made whole ; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. As when our Saviour healed the impotent man who had lain a long

time at the pool of Bethesda without relief, he gives him this caution, "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," John v. 14: so when God hath healed these mortal wounds, which sin hath made in our souls, by his pardoning grace, it highly concerns us, with our most exact circumspection, to beware that we be not again entangled in guilt, and with our most fervent affections to pray that we may not be exposed to the fiery darts of the devil, to wound us anew; for relapses and backslidings are always most dangerous and fatal: new wounds received upon old scars are most difficult to be healed. And indeed, without this preventing grace of God, all his pardoning grace would be but in vain; it would be fruitless to forgive sins, if God did not withal secure us for the future from running upon the score with his justice; for such is the force and fraud of the tempter, and the corruption of our own natures so prone to comply with whatsoever he offers and suggests to us, that did not God as well give us a stock to live upon, as forgive us our former debts, we should soon run ourselves as deep in arrears as ever, and make ourselves liable to be seized on by justice, and condemned to the infernal prison.—
HOPKINS.

That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. When Satan would have had Jesus fall down and worship him, "Jesus said unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship

the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," Matt. iv. 10; which shows, that he judged it to be utterly unlawful to worship any but the true God, and detested the very mention of it; and yet he himself had such worship often performed to him. A leper worshipped him, Matt. viii. 2; a certain ruler worshipped him, Matt. ix. 18; the woman of Canaan worshipped him, Matt. xv. 25; the man that was born blind worshipped him, John ii. 32; his own disciples worshipped him, Matt. xiv. 33; the women that came to his sepulchre after he was risen worshipped him, Matt. xxviii. 9; his apostles also worshipped him after his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 17; and again at his ascension, Luke xxiv. 52. All these, and doubtless many others, worshipped him, and yet he never rebuked them for it; as he would certainly have done, if he had not been the true God, to whom alone such worship was due, according to his own words. All acknowledge him to be a good man; but no good man, nor any good creature whatever, would have suffered himself to be thus worshipped as a God, without reproving those who did it. When Cornelius fell down to worship Peter, he took him up saying, "Stand up, I myself also am a man," Acts x. 25, 26. When the Priest of Jupiter, with the men of Lystra, would have done sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, the apostles rent their clothes, and ran in among them, crying out and saying, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like

passions with you," Acts xiv. 14, 15. When St. John would have worshipped the angel, the angel said to him "See thou do it not; I am thy fellowservant; worship God." Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9. But we find nothing of this in Christ. When people worshipped him, he never forbade them, nor reproved them for it; but accepted of it, and shewed himself to be well pleased with it, by working miracles for them that did it: which he would never have done if he had not been the true God, whom all the creatures in the world are bound to worship. But it is no wonder that he accepted of Divine worship when it is the Divine command, that "all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," John v. 23. And, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 10, 11.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

Our song shall be of Jeau's love,
Who left the heavenly courts above
To bear our guilt and shame;
Th' eternal uncreated Word,
Both David's son, and David's Lord,
Jehovah is his name.

Thou King of kings, and Lord of lords,
Convert our hearts to hear thy words,
Thy wondrous grace to tell;
Wake, harp of Judah, bear the sound
Far as creation's utmost bound;
All hail! Immanuel.

§ CCXLIII.

CHAP. V. 24—47.

Jesus reproveth the Jews; shewing by the testimony of his Father, of John, of his works, and of the Scriptures, who he is.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; 'but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when 'the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself: so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And 'hath given him authority to execute judgment also, 'because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 'And shall come forth; 'they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil,

unto the resurrection of damnation.

30 'I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because 'I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

31 'If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 ¶ 'There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 Ye sent unto John, 'and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.

35 He was a burning and 'a shining light: and 'ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 ¶ But 'I have greater witness than *that* of John: for 'the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, 'hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, 'nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he

hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 ¶ 'Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and 'they are they which testify of me.

40 "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 "I receive not honour from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 'How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not 'the honour that *cometh* from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: 'there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: 'for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

p ch. iii. 16, 18; & vi. 40, 47; & viii. 51; & xx 31.—
1 John iii. 14.—r ver. 28. Eph. ii. 1, 8; & v. 14. Col. ii.
13.—s ver. 22.—Acts x. 42; & xvii. 31.—Dan. vii. 13, 14
—t sa. xxvi. 19. 1 Thes. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 52.—u Dan.
xii. 2. Mat. xxv. 32, 33, 46.—y ver. 19.—z Mat. xxvi. 28.
ch. iv. 34; & vi. 38.—a See ch. viii. 14. Rev. iii. 14.—
Mat. iii. 17; & xvii. 5. ch. viii. 18. 1 John v. 6, 7, 9.
—c ch. i. 15, 19, 27, 32.—d 3 Pet. i. 19.—e See Mat. xii.
20; & xxi. 26. Mark vi. 26.—f 1 John v. 9.—g ch. iii. 3;
& x. 25; & xv. 24.—h Mat. iii. 17; & xvii. 5. ch. vi. 27;
& viii. 18.—i Deut. iv. 12. ch. i. 18. 1 Tim. i. 17.
John iv. 12.—k sa. viii. 20; & xxiv. 16. Luke xvi. 28.
ver. 46. Acts xvii. 11.—l Deut. xviii. 16, 18. Luke xxiv.
27. ch. i. 45.—m ch. i. 11; & iii. 18.—n ver. 34. 1 Thes.
ii. 6.—o ch. xii. 48.—p Rom. ii. 29.—q Rom. ii. 12.—
Gen. iii. 15; & xii. 3; & xviii. 18; & xxi. 18; & xiii.
10. Deut. xviii. 16, 18. ch. i. 46. Acts xxvi. 24.

READER.—*Verily, verily I say unto you, &c.* Our Lord proceeded to state certain decisive proofs, in support of the claims which he made. Our reason is appealed to in confirmation of our faith: and evidence in abundance may be adduced, to convince us that our holy religion is no foolish fancy or base imposition. The Gospel does not evade, but challenges and demands, a fair inquiry. Accordingly, Jesus did not rest the matter upon his own mere assertions, which might appear suspicious, but showed, by a variety of arguments, that he was the very person whom he declared himself to be.

He appealed to the testimony of John the Baptist, who had seen the Spirit of God descending in an open manner upon him, and heard a voice from heaven affirming his high character. To him they had once appeared to pay attention, and had sent a deputation to consult him; and yet they would not abide by his decision.

He referred them to his own miracles, in attestation of his Divine mission. He had performed such wonderful works as no human power ever could effect: these, therefore, sufficiently evinced that he could not be a deceiver, but was indeed, what he uniformly maintained, the Saviour that should come into the world.

He alleged that his Father himself had borne witness of him: he had done it, not only by the communication of extraordinary gifts, but by an express declaration that

Jesus was his beloved Son. Such an evidence as this had not been vouchsafed on any other occasion. Yet to what purpose was it then given? Alas! it rendered many the more inexcusable for their unbelief, as they hardened their hearts against conviction.

He directed them, likewise, to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. These were the writings of the Old Testament, which they all acknowledged, and professed to receive with the highest regard. To these Divine oracles he made a solemn appeal, in vindication of his own claims, and exposed the inconsistency of pretending reverence for the sacred records, and at the same time rejecting the Saviour, whom they all concurred in pointing out. The inspired authors are witnesses of Christ, either by types, promises, or prophecies; and since Jesus has exactly fulfilled those ancient descriptions, they illustrate and confirm his declarations. How strange is it then, that any, who have the Bible in their hands, should remain in ignorance of him! How absurd and sinful is the general inattention of men to the important contents of that book, which they allow to be a revelation from heaven!

Thus Jesus endeavoured to convince the Jews of his character and mission, and of the justice of those claims which he advanced. And are not we also interested in the subject? Do we, then, receive Christ Jesus the Lord, as he is set forth before us? Do we unfeignedly bow to his authority, and confess him to

be "the Lord from heaven," "God over all?" Much has been said and written about the want of evidence; the same outcry was raised among the unbelieving Jews, "What sign showest thou?" This question was urged again and again, even where proofs in abundance were produced. And nothing is more common than for those, who are determined not to be persuaded, to allege that no decisive arguments are brought, to gain them over to the side of Christianity. It is preposterous that men should make this complaint, and affect to be ready to give every testimony its due consideration, when we know that they refuse to examine with serious attention; nay, that they contemptuously shut their eyes and stop their ears against, every thing which opposes their favourite scheme. We doubt not that the grand cause of infidelity is insincerity, and an extreme depravity of heart. And such reasons as these do not form an excuse for free-thinkers, but rather furnish the grounds of their condemnation. Observe, then, from what source your objections to the Christian doctrines arise; and fear lest you should not conduct your religious inquiries with diligence and honesty, with meekness and solemnity. That your minds may be more deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, weigh carefully the conclusion of our Lord's address, in which he subjoins the most pointed admonitions.

In our application to men who are utterly careless and indifferent, we must not content ourselves with

cold reasoning, but endeavour to alarm their consciences, or else the strongest arguments will fail of their effect. Thus Jesus, upon the occasion before us, attempted to rouse his hearers, and to work upon their hearts, by a plain and faithful representation of the nature, malignity, and danger of their sin. As it is probable that some persons of a similar character and disposition may cast their eyes upon these pages, we would earnestly entreat their serious regard to the considerations here suggested.

He warned and reproved his opposers, because they acted in contempt of his unparalleled kindness, and most gracious offers of salvation, when their own final perdition must be the consequence. He declared that he courted not their favour through ambitious views, and that their destruction would be entirely owing to their obstinate refusal of submission to him. His knowledge of their very thoughts and motives enabled him to detect their hypocrisy, and therefore he observed that their treatment of him fully proved, notwithstanding their professions of regard to God, that their hearts were not under the influence of Divine love. That principle would have led them to receive him, who addressed them in his Father's name, and sought nothing but his Father's glory. So likewise will all our pretences either to devotion or morality be found vain and insincere, if we neglect the great Saviour of the world.

He condemned them for their

anxiety to procure respect and empty titles of honour from their fellow-creatures, while they felt no real concern about the favour and approbation of God; declaring that, in such a state of mind, they could not exercise any proper reliance upon him as the Redeemer. How solemn is the thought! The faith of Jesus cannot consist with ambition, or a foolish fondness for human applause. Those, therefore, whose grand desire and aim is to be admired and advanced among men, are at once excluded from the number of his true disciples. He requires us to take up our cross, and to follow him through contempt and tribulation. Such as are unwilling to do this, understand not his worth or their own necessities; and, of consequence, they cannot believe in his name.

He warned them, finally, that Moses, the great founder of their own religion, to whom they professed an unreserved submission, appeared as their accuser before God; and that, as they would be fully convicted on the charge of rejecting that prophet, there would be no need to bring any further testimony against them. They were condemned on their own principles. Moses had written much concerning the Redeemer, and represented his office, work, and character, by various rites and ceremonies: a real regard, therefore, to those ancient records would have produced a cordial reception of Jesus, in whom the types and prophecies were fulfilled. Yet such was their astonishing

ignorance and perverseness, that, with the Bible in their hands, they denied and persecuted the very person of whom they were continually reading.

The address is applicable to others besides Jews; to many among ourselves, who pretend to pay the highest deference both to the Old and the New Testament as the revelation of God. May we not ask, Do not these scriptures contain the heaviest charge against you, while you oppose the authority of Christ, and despise his grace? And should you not, to be consistent, either totally reject the book of inspiration, or else change your own principles and practice? The sin of unbelief is generally thought of little consequence; for it is presumed that men will not be finally condemned for mere opinions. But from the representation here given, does it not appear that it includes the most complicated guilt. It is not barely an error of the judgment, but betrays an extreme depravity of heart. It is not a single offence, for it is always accompanied with other base principles, and infallibly leads to every species of ill conduct.

Unhappy they on whom this sin is chargeable! Who treat the Saviour and his offers of mercy with contempt! O, consider how wretched is the state of your mind, while you discover the utmost disdain for infinite excellence, and repay the tenderest love with hatred! Your wickedness is of a heinous nature, and highly aggravated. You despise "the Lord of Glory," the Son

of God, who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." You pay no regard to the united testimonies of earth and heaven in his favour. You scorn the kindest and richest offers ever made to man. You are unwilling to bow to him, whom even angels worship, or to be indebted to him for the life of your souls, when, alas! without him you must inevitably perish. You set light by his unparalleled condescension and labours of love, and, in defiance of all admonitions and threatenings, are rushing on, with steady course, to certain and everlasting damnation.

It is proper by these repeated warnings to call your attention to your own perilous condition. But how little effect is produced by such solemn reproofs! Probably, after our Lord's address, his accusers and judges were silenced, and restrained by an awful impression upon their minds from proceeding to any act of violence against him. So possibly may you, who are his avowed opposers, for a season at least be convinced and alarmed by these faithful representations of your guilt and danger. You may seem to relinquish your objections, and yet persevere in unbelief, and be destroyed for ever.—ROBINSON.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.—That Christ is the substance of the whole New Testament, containing the history, doctrines, and prophecies of him in the administration of the latter ages of the church, is very

manifest to all. The Old Scriptures are again divided into the law and the prophets; for the historical parts of them contain either typical prefigurations of the evangelical church, or inductions and exemplary demonstrations of the general truth of God's justice and promises, which are set forth by way of doctrine and precept in the law and prophets. Christ is the sum of both these. Matt. v. 17. They waited upon him in his transfiguration, Luke xvi. 16; to note that in him they had their accomplishment. For the law; Christ is the substance of it; he brought grace to fulfil the exactions, and truth to make good the prefigurations of the whole law; John i. 17. The ceremonial law he fulfilled and abolished: the moral law he fulfilled and established, that his obedience thereunto might be the ground of our righteousness, and his spirit and grace therewith might be the ground of our obedience; and therefore it is called the law of Christ, Gal. vi. 2. For the prophets; he is the sum of them too, for to him they give all witness; Acts x. 43. He is the author of their prophecies; they spake by his Spirit: and he is the object of their prophecies; they spake of the grace and salvation which was to come by him, 1 Pet. 10, 11. So that the whole scriptures are nothing else but a testimony of Christ, and faith in him, of that absolute and universal necessity which is laid upon all the world to believe in his name. John v. 39.—REYNOLDS.

HYMN.

Does the lord of glory speak,
To his creatures here below ?
And may souls, so frail and weak,
All his gracious dealings know ?
Does the blessed Bible bring
Tidings from our Heavenly King ?

Oh, with what intense desire
Should we search that sacred book !
Here our zeal should never tire ;
Here we should delight to look
For the rules by mercy given,
To conduct our souls to heaven.

Shall not he that humbly seeks
All the light of truth discern ?
Do we not, when Jesus speaks,
Feel our hearts within us burn ?
For his soul-reviving voice
Bids the mourner to rejoice.

Lord, thy teaching grace impart,
That we may not read in vain ;
Write thy precepts on our heart,
Make thy truths and doctrines plain :
Let the message of thy love
Guide us to thy rest above.

BATHURST.

§ CCXLIV.

CHAP. VI. 1—21.

Christ feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. Therefore the people would have made him a king ; but withdrawing himself he walked on the sea to his disciples.

AFTER * these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 † And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 ¶ † When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat ?

6 And this he said to prove him : for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, † Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes : † but what are they amongst so many ?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves : and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down : and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth ^s that prophet that should come into the world.

15 ¶ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 ^r And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

a Mat. xiv. 15. Mark vi. 35. Luke ix. 10, 12.—b Lev. xxiii. 5, 7. Deut. xvi. 1. ch. ii. 13; & v. 1.—c Mat. xiv. 14. Mark vi. 35. Luke ix. 12.—d See Num. xi. 21, 22.—e 2 Kings iv. 43.—f Gen. xlix. 10. Deut. xxviii. 15, 18. Mat. xi. 3. ch. i. 21; & iv. 19, 25; & vii. 40.—g Mat. xiv. 23. Mark vi. 47.

See § § XLVIII, XLIX.

Matthew xiv. 13—33.

§ CCXLV.

CHAP. VI. 22—40.

Christ reproveth the people flocking after him, and all the fleshly hearers of his word; he declareth himself to be the bread of life to believers.

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone;

23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but ^afor that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: 'for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, ^aThis is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, 'What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 ^m Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, ⁿHe gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my

Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 'Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, 'I am the bread of life: 'he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 'But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and 'him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, ⁿnot to do mine own will, ⁿbut the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, ⁿthat of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, ⁿthat every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

[Or *Word not*—A ver. 54. ch. iv. 14.—f Mat. iii. 17; & xvii. 5. Mark i. 11; & ix. 7. Luke iii. 22; & ix. 36. ch. i. 33; & v. 37; & viii. 18. Acts ii. 22. 2 Pet. i. 17.—A 1 John iii. 23.—f Mat. xii. 33; & xvi. 1. Mark viii. 11. 1 Cor. i. 22.—m Ex. xvi. 16. Num. xi. 7. Neh. ix. 15. Wisd. xvi. 20. 1 Cor. x. 3.—n Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25.—o See ch. iv. 15.—p ver. 48, 58.—q ch. iv. 14; & vii. 37.—r ver. 26, 64.—s ver. 45.—t Mat. xxiv. 24. ch. x. 26, 28. 2 Tim. ii. 19. 1 John ii. 19.—u Mat. xxvi. 30. ch. v. 30.—v ch. iv. 34.—y ch. x. 28; & xvii. 12; & xviii. 9.—z ver. 27, 47, 64. ch. iii. 15, 16; & iv. 14.

READER.—*Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.*—Let us be ashamed to live with our heads bowed down, like grovelling beasts gazing upon the earth, or even to catch at the vain and airy shadows of science, while, in the mean time, we know not, or do not consider, whence we took our rise, and whither we are soon to return, what place is to receive our souls, when they are set at liberty from these bodily prisons. If it is the principal desire of your souls to understand the nature of this felicity, and the way that leads to it, search the Scriptures; for, from them alone, we all think, or profess to think, we can have eternal life. I exhort and beseech you, never to suffer so much as one day to pass, either through lazy negligence, or too much eagerness in inferior studies, without reading some part of the sacred records, with a pious and attentive disposition of mind; still joining with your reading fervent prayer, that you may thereby draw down that Divine light without which spiritual things cannot be read and understood.—LEIGHTON.

This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.—The great business of our life is this acceptance of Christ, and an inseparable union with him. Thrice happy,

686

and more than thrice happy are they, who are joined with him in this undivided union, which no complaints, nor even the day of death, can dissolve; nay, the last day is happy above all other days, for this very reason, that it fully and finally completes this union, and is so far from dissolving it, that it renders it absolutely perfect and everlasting.

But that it may be coeval with eternity, and last for ever, it is absolutely necessary that this union should have its beginning in this short and fleeting life. And, pray, what hinders those of us, that have not entered into this union before, to enter into it without delay? Seeing the bountiful Jesus not only rejects none that come unto him, but also offers himself to all that do not wilfully reject him, and standing at the door, earnestly begs to be admitted. O! Why do not these everlasting doors open, that the king of glory may enter, (Ps. xxiv.) and reign within us? And indeed, no man truly receives Jesus, that does not, at the same time, deliver up himself wholly to him. Among all the advantages we pursue, there is nothing comparable to this exchange. Our gain is immense from both, not only the acceptance of him, but also from surrendering ourselves to him: so long as this is delayed, we are the most abject slaves: when one has delivered himself up to Christ, then, and then only he is truly free, and becomes master of himself. Why should we wander about to no purpose? To him let us turn our

ST. JOHN VI. 41—71.

eyes, on him fix our thoughts, that he, who is ours by the donation of the Father, and his own free gift, may be ours by a cheerful and joyous acceptance. As St. Bernard says on these words of the prophet, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given. Let us therefore make use of what is ours, saith he, for our own advantage." So then let him be ours by *possession* and *use*, and let us be his for ever, never forgetting how dearly he has bought us.—

LEIGHTON.

The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.—Lo, thou art bread indeed: not the common bread; but manna: not the Israelitish manna; alas, that fell from no higher than the region of clouds, and they that ate it died with it in their mouths; but thou art the Living Bread, that came down from the heaven of heavens, of which whosoever eats lives for ever. Thy flesh is meat, not for our stomachs, but for our souls; our faith receives and digests thee; and makes thee ours, and us thine.

Our material food, in these corruptible bodies, runs into corruption: thy spiritual food nourisheth purely, and strengthens us to a blessed immortality.

As for this material food, many a one longs for it that cannot get it: many a one hath it, that cannot eat it; many eat it, that cannot digest it but into noxious and corrupt humours; all that receive it, do but maintain a perishing life, if not a languishing death. But this flesh of thine, as it was never withheld from any true

appetite, so it never yields but wholesome and comfortable sustenance to the soul; never hath any other issue than an everlasting life and happiness.

O Saviour, whensoever I sit at mine own table, let me think of thine: whensoever I feed on the bread and meat that is set before me, and feel myself nourished by that repast, let me mind that better sustenance, which my soul receives from thee; and find thee more one with me than that bodily food.—

HALL.

HYMN.

Thee we adore, Eternal Word,
For thou our souls hast fed;
Thou art our living stream, O Lord,
And thou the immortal bread.

The manna came from lower skies,
But Jesus from above,
Where the fresh springs of pleasure rise,
And rivers flow with love.

The Jews, the fathers, died at last,
Who ate that heavenly bread;
But the provisions which we taste
Can raise us from the dead.

Our souls shall draw their heavenly breath,
While Jesus finds supplies;
Nor shall our graces sink in death,
For Jesus never dies.

Daily our mortal flesh decays,
But Christ our life shall come;
His unresisted power shall raise
Our bodies from the tomb.

§ CCXLVI.

CHAP. VI. 41—71.

Christ declareth himself to be the bread of life to believers. Many disciples depart from him. Peter confesseth him. Judas is a devil.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 'It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. 'Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, 'save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 'I am that bread of life.

49 'Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 'This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

688

51 I am the living bread 'which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and " the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore " strove among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except 'ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood ye have no life in you.

54 'Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, 'dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 'This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 ' Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 " *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 ' It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit and and *they* are life.

64 But ' there are some of you that believe not. For ' Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore ' said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 ¶ ' From that *time* many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast ' the words of eternal life.

69 ' And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, ' Have not I chosen you twelve, ' and one of you is a devil?

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

6 Mat. xiii. 65. Mark vi. 3. Luke iv. 22. 4-6 Cant. 1. 4. ver. 65.—c Is. ltv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34. Mio. lv. 2. Heb. viii. 10. & x. 16.—d ver. 37.—e ch. i. xviii. & v. 37. —f Mat. xi. 27. Luke x. 22. ch. i. 18; & vii. 39; & viii. 12.—g ch. iii. 16, 18, 36. ver. 40.—h ver. xxxiii. 35.—i ver. 51.—j ver. 51, 58.—k ch. iii. 13.—m Heb. x. 5, 10.—n ch. vii. 43; & ix. 16; & x. 19.—o ch. iii. 9.—p Mat. xxvi. 26, 28.—q ver. 27, 40, 63. ch. iv. 14.—r 1 John iii. 24; & iv. 15, 16.—s ver. 49, 50, 51.—t ver. 66. Mat. xi. 6.—u ch. iii. 13. Mark xvi. 19. Acta i. 9. Eph. iv. 8.—v 2 Cor. iii. 6.—w ver. 36.—x ch. ii. 24, 25; & xiii. 11.—y ver. 44, 45.—z ver. 60.—c Acta v. 20.—d Mat. xvi. 16. Mark viii. 29. Luke ix. 20. ch. i. 40; & xi. 27.—e Luke vi. 13.—f ch. xiii. 27.

READER.—*No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.*—Doth Christ compel men against their wills to be subject unto him? No, in no wise. He hath ordered to bring them in by way of voluntariness and obedience. And herein is the wisdom of his power seen, that his grace shall mightily produce those effects in men, which their hearts shall most obediently and willingly consent unto; that he is able to use the proper and genuine motions of second causes to the producing of his own most holy, wise, and merciful purposes. As we see human wisdom can so order, moderate, and make use of natural motions, that by these artificial effects shall be produced; as in a clock, the natural motion of the weight or plummet causeth the artificial distribution of hours and minutes; and in a mill the natural motion of the wind or water causeth an artificial effect in grinding the corn; how much more,

then, shall the wisdom of Almighty God, whose weakness is stronger, and whose foolishness is wiser, than men, be able so to use, incline, and order the wills of men, without destroying them. or their liberty, as that thereby the kingdom of his Son shall be set up amongst them ! So that though there be still an habitual, radical, fundamental indetermination and indifferency to several ways, unto none of which there can be a compulsion, yet by the secret, ineffable, and most sweet operation of the Spirit of grace, opening the eyes, convincing the judgment, persuading the affections, inclining the heart, giving an understanding, quickening and awakening the conscience, a man shall be swayed unto the obedience of Christ ; and shall come unto him so certainly as if he were drawn, and yet so sweetly as if he were left unto himself. For in the calling of men by the word there is *a drawing and a coming*. The Father draweth and the man cometh. That notes the efficacy of grace, and this the sweetness of grace. Grace worketh strongly, and therefore God is said to draw ; and it worketh sweetly too, and therefore man is said to come.—REYNOLDS.

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.—Man, in this life, becomes so much the more perfect and happy, in proportion as he has his mind and affections more thoroughly conformed to the pattern of

that most blessed and perfect life : and this is, indeed, the great ambition of a true christian, this is his study, which he ceases not to pursue with ardour day and night : nor does he let so much as one day pass, without copying some lines of that perfect pattern ; and the more he advances in purity of mind, the greater progress he makes in the knowledge and contemplation of Divine things.

But who will instruct us with regard to the means of reaching this blessed mark ? Who will shew us how we may attain this conformity to God, and most effectually promote his honour and glory, so that at last we may come to the enjoyment of him in that endless life, and be for ever satisfied with the beatific vision of him ? What faithful guide shall we find to direct us in this way ? Surely he himself must be our leader ; there is no other besides him, that can answer our purpose. It is he alone that acquaints us with his own nature, as far as it is necessary for us to know it ; and he alone that directs us to the way wherein he chooses to be worshipped.

Nothing is more certain, than that the doctrine which leads us to God, must take its rise from him ; for by no art whatever can the waters be made to rise higher than their fountain.—LEIGHTON.

The Father of mercies hath appointed means of the salvation of mankind, which lie open to them, if they would not be wanting to themselves ; but especially to us,

who are within the bosom of his church, he hath held forth saving helps in abundance.

What warnings, what reproofs, what exhortations, what invitations, what intreaties, what importunities, hath he forborne for our conversion ! what menaces, what afflictions, what judgments, hath he not made use of for the prevention of our damnation ! Can there be now any man so desperately mad as to shut heaven gates against him, which the merciful God leaves open for him ? or as to break open the gates of hell, and rush violently into the pit of destruction, which God had latched against him ?—HALL.

I am that bread of life. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.—Meat and drink, we know, are, by God's own appointment, the common supports of human life. Of all meats, bread is reckoned the most strengthening. Of all drinks, wine is the most refreshing. Now, as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by these, which are used as the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper ; so are our souls by the things signified by them, even by the body and blood of Christ, which are there verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful. It is a great refreshment to our souls, to have the pardon of our sins sealed and delivered to us, as it is there, in the blood of Christ. And our souls are as much strengthened by the grace of God,

which always follows upon his pardon and reconciliation to us, and accompanieth the body and blood of Christ wheresoever it is. And therefore, all who duly receive it do thereby receive it from him, "and grace for grace," John i. 16, and so go from strength to strength, till they "come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. iv. 13.

Let us hear what he himself saith : "I am the bread of life," saith he ; "he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." But then he adds afterwards, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John vi. 35—63. As if he had said, all that I have now spoken, is to be understood in a spiritual sense, and of a spiritual life. I am the life of your souls. It is by my body and my blood that your souls are quickened, nourished, strengthened, and preserved to eternal life.

ST. JOHN VII. 1—24.

For this we have Christ's own word, and therefore may be confident, that as it is by him only that we can be regenerate, and born again to a new and spiritual life, so it is by him only, that this new and spiritual life can be maintained and excited in us, so as to put forth and manifest itself in our actions. "Without him we can do nothing," John xv. 5, as he himself said. "But we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us," Phil. iv. 13, as his apostle found by experience. But he strengthens none but those who believe in him, and therefore only because they do so. For it is by our believing in him, that we are made members of his body, and so receive strength and nourishment from him, our head. And according as our faith is stronger or weaker, so is the strength we receive from him more or less: and therefore, the holy Sacrament being the most sovereign means for the confirming of our faith in him, our souls must needs be very much strengthened and refreshed by it; for we there receive the proper food for our souls, the bread of life, and the water of life, the blessed body and blood of Christ himself. And if his body and blood, then his Spirit too which is always with them; that Holy Spirit which purifies our hearts, which sanctifies our nature, which worketh in us both to will and to do, which strengthens and enables us to overcome the world, to withstand temptations, to mortify our sins, to do our whole duty both to God and man, and so "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to

God, through Jesus Christ 'our Lord.'" 1 Pet. ii. 5.—BEVERIDGE.

We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. See Commentary on Matthew XVI. 13—18, in § LIV.

HYMN.

Ours is a rich and royal feast,
Provided by the king of heaven;
How richly fed are they, how blest,
To whom the bread of life is given!

In sacred fellowship we meet
To celebrate our Saviour's death;
His blood we drink, his flesh we eat,
His people feed on him by faith.

We worship him who bore the cross,
We glory in his death alone;
The world itself appears but loss,
To those by whom his name is known.

On earth his dying love shall be
Our spring of hope, our theme of joy;
And, when in heav'n our Lord we see,
His praise shall all our pow'rs employ.

KELLY.

§ CCXLVII.

CHAP. VII. 1—24.

Jesus reproveth the ambition and boldness of his kinsmen; goeth up from Galilee to the feast of tabernacles; teacheth in the temple.

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, "because the Jews sought to kill him.

2 'Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

3 'His brethren therefore

ST. JOHN VII. 1—24.

said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

5 For ^αneither did his brethren believe in him.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, ^βMy time is not yet come : but your time is alway ready.

7 ^γThe world cannot hate you ; but me it hateth, ^δbecause I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast : I go not up yet unto this feast ; ^εfor my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10 ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then ^ζthe Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he ?

12 And ^ηthere was much murmuring among the people concerning him : for ^θsome said, He is a good man : others said, Nay ; but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him ^ιfor fear of the Jews.

14 ¶ Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 ^κAnd the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man ^λletters, having never learned ?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, ^μMy doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 ^νIf any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

18 ^ξHe that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 ^οDid not Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law ? ^πWhy go ye about to kill me ?

20 The people answered and said, ^ρThou hast a devil : who goeth about to kill thee ?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

22 ^σMoses therefore gave unto you circumcision ; (not because it is of Moses, ^τbut of the fathers ;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath

day receive circumcision, † that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because ' I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

24 ' Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

a ch. v. 16, 18.—b Lev. xxiii. 34.—c Mat. xii. 46. Mark iii. 31. Acts i. 14.—d Mark iii. 21.—e ch. ii. 4; & viii. 20. ver. viii. 30.—f ch. xv. 19.—g ch. iii. 19.—h ch. viii. 30. ver. 6.—i ch. xi. 56.—k ch. ix. 16; & x. 19.—l Mat. xxi. 46. Luke vii. 16. ch. vi. 14. ver. 40.—m ch. ix. 22; & xii. 42; & xix. 58.—n Mat. xiii. 54. Mark vi. 2. Luke iv. 22. Acts ii. 7.—o Or, *learning*.—p ch. iii. 11; & viii. 28; & xii. 49; & xiv. 10, 24.—q Eccles. xxi. 11. ch. viii. 48.—r ch. v. 41; & viii. 50.—s Ex. xxiv. 8. Deut. xxxiii. 4. John i. 17. Acts vii. 55.—t Mat. xii. 14. Mark iii. 6—ch. v. 16, 18; & x. 31, 39; & xi. 58.—u ch. viii. 48, 52; & x. 20.—v Lev. xii. 8.—w Gen. xvii. 10.—x Or, *without breaking the law of Moses*.—y ch. v. 8, 9, 16.—z Deut. i. 16, 17. Prov. xxiv. 23. ch. viii. 16. Jam. ii. 1.

READER.—*My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*—It is God's revelation, not the ratiocination of man, that must give us light into these Divine mysteries. Were it a matter of human disquisition, why did not those sages of nature, the learned philosophers of former times, reach unto it? but now a more learned man than they, the great doctor of the Gentiles, tells us, that the gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ yields forth the revelation of the mysteries which were "kept secret since the world began; but are now manifested by the Scriptures of the Prophets; and, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Lo, he saith not to the obedience of reason, but of faith; and that faith doth more transcend reason, than reason doth sense.

Thou urgest me, therefore, to be

a man; I profess myself to be a Christian man. It is reason that makes me a man: it is faith that makes me a Christian.

The wise and bountiful God hath vouchsafed to hold forth four several lights to men; all which move in four several orbs, one above another; the light of sense, the light of reason, the light of faith, the light of ecstatic or Divine vision. And all of these are taken up with their own proper objects: sense is busied about these outward and material things: reason is confined to things intelligible: faith is employed in matters supernatural and spiritual: Divine vision, in objects celestial, and infinitely glorious.

None of these can exceed their bounds; and extend to a sphere above their own. What can the brute creature, which is led by mere sense, do, or apprehend, in matters of understanding and discourse? What can mere man, who is led by reason, discern in spiritual and supernatural things? What can the Christian, who is led by faith, which is "the evidence of things not seen," attain unto in the clear vision of God and heavenly glory?

I will, therefore, follow my sense so far as that will lead me; and not suffer myself to be beaten off from so sure a guide. Where my sense leaves me, I will betake myself to the direction of reason, and, in all natural and moral things, shall be willingly led by the guidance thereof. But, when it comes to supernatural and Divine truths; when I have the word of a God for my assurance,

ST. JOHN VII. 1—24.

farewell reason, and welcome faith : as, when I shall have dispatched this weary pilgrimage, and from a traveller shall come to be a comprehensor, farewell faith, and welcome vision.

In the mean time, I shall labour, what I may, to understand all revealed truths ; and when I cannot apprehend, I shall adore : humbly submitting to that word of the great and holy God, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord : For, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah lv. 8, 9.—

HALL.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.— It is not an hearing and knowing our duty that will stand us in any stead before God, but our doing of it ; it is not our believing that we may be saved by believing in Christ, whereby we can be saved, without actual believing in him, without such a faith whereby we depend upon him, for the pardon and salvation of our immortal souls, and consequently for the assistance of his grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to obey his gospel, and to perform all such things as himself hath told us are necessary in order to our everlasting happiness : and whatsoever faith we pretend to, unless it comes to this, that it puts us upon universal obedience to all the commands of God, we may conclude it will do us no

good, for it is not such a faith as Christ requires, which always works by love, conquers the world, subdues sin, purifies the heart, and sanctifies the whole soul wheresoever it comes. It is such a faith as this which is the wedding-garment, without which no man is chosen or admitted to partake of those celestial banquets, which Christ our Saviour hath provided for us. And therefore no man can have any ground at all to believe or hope himself to be elected or chosen to eternal salvation, that is not holy in all manner of conversation ; God himself hath told us expressly, "That without holiness no man shall see the Lord."—

BEVERIDGE.

"The wise increaseth learning." Prov. i. Wouldest thou but receive and hearken to the easiest things represented by God, these would enlighten and enlarge thy soul to receive more ; especially walking by the light thou hast, be it never so little, that invites and draws in more. Be diligent in the practice of that you know ; if you would know more, believe it, that is the way to grow. "Whoso observes," (keep these things, acts according to the knowledge of them) 'he shall understand," Job vii. 17 ; shall understand it by finding it, (shall understand it in themselves, the word is in the reciprocal mood,) it shall be particularly and effectually shown unto him ; they shall experience it, and so understand it.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Jesus, my Saviour and my Lord,
To Thee I lift mine eyes,
Teach and instruct me by thy word,
And make me truly wise.

Make me to know and understand
Thy whole revealed will;
Fain would I learn to comprehend
Thy love more clearly still.

Oh, may thy word my thoughts engage
In each perplexing case!
Help me to feed on ev'ry page,
And grow in ev'ry grace.

Oh, let it purify my heart
And guide me all my days!
Thy wonders, Lord, to me impart,
And Thou shalt have the praise.

§ CCXLVIII.

CHAP. VII. 25—53.

Christ teacheth in the temple. Divers opinions of him among the people. The Pharisees are angry that their officers took him not, and chide with Nicodemus for taking his part.

25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. 'Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

27 'Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying,

696

'Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and 'I am not come of myself, but he that sent me 'is true, 'whom ye know not.

29 But 'I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 Then 'they sought to take him: but 'no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And 'many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

32 ¶ The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

33 Then said Jesus unto them, 'Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye "shall seek me, and shall not find *me*; and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto "the dispersed among the °Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What *manner of* saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not find *me*: and

where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

37 ° In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, ° If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 ° He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, ° out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (° But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet 'glorified.)

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is ° the Prophet.

41 Others said, ° This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come ° out of Galilee?

42 ° Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, ° where David was?

43 So ° there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And ° some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them,

Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers answered, ° Never man spake like this man.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

48 ° Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (° he that came † to Jesus by night, being one of them.)

51 ° Doth our law judge *any* man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for ° out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

° ver. 48.—^a Mat. xiii. 55. Mark vi. 3. Luke iv. 22. —^c See ch. viii. 14.—^d ch. v. 43; & viii. 42.—^e ch. v. 32; & viii. 26. Rom. iii. 4.—^f ch. i. 18; & viii. 55.—^g Mat. xi. 27. ch. x. 15.—^h Mark xi. 18. Luke xix. 47; & xx. 19. ver. 19. ch. viii. 37.—ⁱ ver. 44. ch. viii. 20.—^k Mat. xii. 28. ch. iii. 2; & viii. 30.—^l ch. xiii. 38; & xvi. 16. —^m Hos. v. 8. ch. viii. 21; & xiii. 58.—ⁿ Is. xi. 12; Jam. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1.—^o Or, *Greeks*.—^p Lev. xxiii. 36. —^q Is. lv. 1. ch. vi. 36. Rev. xxii. 17.—^r Deut. xviii. 18. —^s Prov. xviii. 4. Is. xii. 3; & xlv. 3. ch. iv. 14.—^t Is. xiv. 3. Joel ii. 28. ch. xvi. 7. Acts ii. 17. 33, 35. —^u ch. xii. 16; & xvi. 7.—^v Deut. xviii. 15, 18. ch. i. 21; & vi. 14.—^w ch. iv. 42; & vi. 69.—^x ver. 52. ch. i. 46.—^y Ps. cxxiii. 11. Jer. xxiii. 5. Mic. v. 2. Mat. ii. 6. Luke ii. 4.—^z 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 4.—^{aa} ver. 12. ch. ix. 16; & x. 19.—^{ab} ver. 50.—^{ac} Mat. vii. 29.—^{ad} ch. xii. 42. Acts vi. 7. 1 Cor. i. 20, 26; & ii. 8.—^{ae} ch. iii. 2.—^{af} Gr. *to Adam*.—^{ag} Deut. i. 17; & xvii. 8, 8c.; & xix. 15.—^{ah} Is. ix. 1, 2. Mat. iv. 16. ch. i. 48. ver. 41.

READER.—*Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.*—The holy Jesus, having showed forth the treasures of his Father's wisdom,

in revelations and holy precepts, and, upon the stock of his Father's greatness, having demonstrated great power in miracles, and these being instanced in acts of mercy, he mingled the glories of heaven, to transmit them to earth, to raise us up to the participations of heaven; he was pleased, by healing the bodies of infirm persons, to invite their spirits to his discipline, and by his power to convey healing, and by that mercy, to lead us into the treasures of revelation; that both bodies and souls, our wills and understandings, by Divine instruments, might be brought to Divine perfections in the participations of a Divine nature. It was a miraculous mercy that God should look upon us in our blood, and a miraculous condescension that his Son should take our nature, and even this favour we could not believe without many miracles; and so contrary was our condition to all possibilities of happiness, that if salvation had not marched to us all the way in miracle, we had perished in the ruins of a sad eternity. And now it would be but reasonable, that, since God, for our sakes, hath rescinded so many laws of natural establishment, we also, for his, and for our own, would be content to do violence to those natural inclinations, which are also criminal when they derive into action. Every man living in the state of grace is a perpetual miracle, as his passions are made reasonable, as his reason is turned to faith, and his soul to spirit, and his body to a temple, and earth to

heaven; and less than this will not dispose us to such glories, which, being the portion of saints and angels, and the nearest communications with God, are infinitely above what we see, or hear, or understand.—TAYLOR.

It will be found true, that where there is no obedience, there is no right knowledge of Christ: but, out of all question, where there is not a competency of knowledge, there can be no obedience; and as these two lodge together, so observe what attends them both; 2 Thess. i. 8, "He shall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And if there be any that think to shroud unpunished amongst the thickets of ignorance, especially amidst the means of knowledge, take notice of this, though it may hide the deformity of sin from your own sight for a time, it cannot palliate it from the piercing eye, nor cover it from the revenging hand of Divine justice. As you would escape then that wrath to come, come to wisdom's school, and how simple soever ye be as to this world, if you would not perish with the world, learn to be wise unto salvation.—LEIGHTON.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.—See Commentary on Chap. IV. ver. 14, in § CCXL.

This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given:

ST. JOHN VIII. 1—30.

because that Jesus was not yet glorified.
 —By all which hath been spoken of the mission of the Spirit in great abundance, after Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, we should learn with what affections to receive the Gospel of salvation, for the teaching whereof the Holy Spirit was shed abroad abundantly on the ambassadors of Christ; and with what heavenly conversations to express the power which our hearts have felt therein, to walk as children of the light, and as becometh the gospel of Christ; to adorn our high profession and not to receive the grace of God in vain. Consider that the word thus quickened will have an operation, either to convince unto righteousness, or to seal unto condemnation; as the sun, either to melt, or to harden; as the rain, either to ripen corn or weeds; as the sceptre of a king, either to rule subjects or to subdue enemies; as the fire of a goldsmith, either to fine gold, or to devour dross! as the waters of the sanctuary, either to heal places, or to turn them into salt-pits, Ezek. xlvii. 11. Consider, according to the proportion of the Spirit of Christ, in his word revealed, shall be the proportion of their judgment who despise it. The contempt of a great salvation, and glorious ministry, shall bring a sorer condemnation, Heb. ii. 2—4. Sins against the light of nature are no sins in comparison of those against the gospel. The earth which drinketh in the rain that falls oft upon it, and yet beareth nothing but thorns and briars,

is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, Heb. vi. 7, 8. Consider that even here God will not always suffer his Spirit to strive with flesh; there is a day of peace which he calleth "our day;" a day wherein he entreateth and beseecheth us to be reconciled; but if we therein judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life, and go obstinately on till there be no remedy, he can easily draw in his Spirit, and give us over to the infatuation of our own hearts, that we may not be cleansed any more till he hath caused his fury to rest upon us, Ezek. xxiv. 13.—REYNOLDS.

HYMN.

Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet!

Join all the names of love and pow'r,
 That ever man or angels bore,
 All are too mean to speak his worth,
 Or set Immanuel's glory forth.

Great Prophet! let me bless thy name;
 By thee the joyful tidings came,
 Of wrath appeased; of sins forgiven,
 Of hell subdued, and peace with heav'n.

Jesus, my great High Priest, has died,
 I seek no sacrifice beside;
 His blood did once for all atone,
 And now it pleads before the throne.

My Lord, my conqueror, and my king,
 Thy Sceptre and thy word I sing;
 Thine is the victory, and I sit
 A joyful subject at thy feet!

WARRE.

§ CCXLIX.

CHAP. VIII. 1—30.

Christ delivereth the woman taken in adultery. He preacheth himself the light of the world, and justifieth his doctrine.

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.*

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, "being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

700

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but "ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

15 "Ye judge after the flesh; "I judge no man.

16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and "the Father

that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, 'Ye neither know me, nor my Father: 'if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 These words spake Jesus in 'the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and 'no man laid hands on him; for 'his hour was not yet come.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and 'ye shall seek me, and "shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, 'Ye are from beneath; I am from above: 'ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 'I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: "for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but 'he that sent me is true; and

'I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have 'lifted up the Son of man, 'then shall ye know that I am *he*, and 'that I do nothing of myself; but "as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 And ^he that sent me is with me: 'the Father hath not left me alone; 'for I do always those things that please him.

30 As he spake these words, 'many believed on him.

a Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22.—b Deut. xvii. 7. Rom. ii. 1.—c Rom. ii. 22.—d Luke ix. 56; & xii. 14. ch. iii. 17.—e ch. v. 14.—f ch. i. 4, 5, 9; & iii. 19; & iv. 5; & xii. 36, 36, 46.—g ch. v. 31.—h See ch. vii. 28; & x. 29.—i ch. vii. 24.—k ch. iii. 17; & xii. 47; & xviii. 36.—l ver. 29. ch. xvi. 32.—m Deut. xvii. 6; & xix. 15. Mat. xviii. 16. 2 Cor. xiii. 1. Heb. x. 25.—n ch. v. 37.—o ver. 55. ch. xvi. 8.—p ch. xiv. 7.—q Mark xii. 41.—r ch. vii. 30.—s ch. vii. 8.—t ch. vii. 34; & xiii. 33.—u ver. 24.—v ch. iii. 31.—w ch. xv. 19; & xvii. 16. 1 John iv. 5.—x ver. 21.—y Mark xvi. 16.—z ch. vii. 25.—a ch. iii. 32; & xv. 15.—b ch. iii. 14; & xii. 32.—c Rom. i. 4.—d ch. v. 19, 30.—e ch. iii. 11.—f ch. xiv. 10, 11.—g ver. 16.—h ch. iv. 34; & v. 30; & vi. 38.—i ch. vii. 31; & x. 42; & xi. 45.

READER.—*When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, no man, Lord.—O wonderful power of conscience! Man can no more stand out against it, than it can stand out against God. The Almighty, whose substitute is set in our bosom, sets it on work to accuse. It is no denying, when that says we are guilty; when that condemns us, in vain are we acquitted by the world.*

ST. JOHN VIII. 1—30.

With what bravery did these hypocrites come to set upon Christ! With what triumph did they insult upon that guilty soul! Now they are thunderstruck with their own conscience, and drop away confounded; and well is he that can run away farthest from his own shame. No wicked man needs to seek out of himself for a judge, accuser, witness, tormentor.

There yet stands the mournful adulteress. She might have gone forth with them, nobody constrained her stay; but that which sent them away staid her,—conscience. She knew her guiltiness was publicly accused, and durst not be by herself denied: as one that was therefore fastened there by her own guilty heart, she stirs not till she may receive a dismissal.

Could she be in a safer place than before the tribunal of a Saviour? Might she have chosen her refuge, whither should she have fled? O happy we, if, when we are convinced in ourselves of our sins, we can set ourselves before that judge who is our Surety, our Advocate, our Redeemer, our Ransom, our Peace!—
HALL.

And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.—O Son of God, though thou wouldst not then be a judge, yet thou wilt once be: thou wouldst not in thy first coming judge the sins of men; thou wilt come to judge them in thy second. The time will come when, upon that just and glorious tribunal, thou shalt judge every man according to his works. That we

may not one day hear thee say, “Go, ye cursed,” let us now hear thee say, “Go, and sin no more.”—HALL.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world.—

The sun, we know, is the fountain of all the lights that we have upon earth, without which we could see nothing, not so much as the way that is before us, but should always be groping and stumbling in the dark; whereas by it we can discern every thing that is about us, or at any distance from us, as far as our sight can reach. In which respect our blessed Lord is the Sun indeed; “the light of the world,” “the true light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world,” Heb. i. 9, “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel,” Luke ii. 32, “a marvellous light,” 1 Peter ii. 9, whereby we can see things that are not visible to the eye as plainly as we do those that are. For this “day spring from on high,” this Sun of righteousness, hath visited us, “to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace,” Luke i. 78, 79; to show us the invisible things of God and direct us to all things belonging to our everlasting peace and happiness. He hath made them all clear and manifest to us in his gospel: “but whatsoever maketh manifest is light,” Eph. v. 13; wherefore he is said to have “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,” 2 Tim. i. 10, because he hath there so clearly revealed them to us, that

ST. JOHN VIII. 1—30.

by the light of his holy gospel, we may see all things necessary to be known, believed, or done, in order to eternal life, as plainly as we can see the most visible objects at noon-day.—BEVERIDGE.

He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.—The sun is the first cause under God, not only of light, but also of all the life that is in any creature upon earth, without which nothing could live, no, not so much as a vegetable, much less an animal; for that which we call life, where-with such creatures as have organs fitted for it, are actuated and quickened, so as to be said properly to live, all depends upon the heat and influence of the sun. Should the sun once cease to be, or to influence the world, all living creatures would immediately expire and die. So is Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the fountain of all spiritual life. "With thee," saith David, "is the fountain of life, in thy light shall we see light," Ps. xxxvi. 9; where we see that light and life in this sense also go together—they both proceed from the same fountain, "the Sun of righteousness;" who therefore saith, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." That light which hath life always proceeding from it, and accompanying it; so that he is both life and light itself. "I am," saith he, "the way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6. And our life, as the apostle calls him, Col. iii. 4. Even the life of all

that believe in him. "The life that I now live in the flesh," saith the same Apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. And therefore, he who believeth, and so hath the Son, he hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.

Ye shall die in your sins.—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his way and live." And elsewhere he assures us, that he would "have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And therefore, if we believe what God saith, nay, if we believe what he hath sworn, we must needs acknowledge that it is his will and pleasure, that as many as are called should be all chosen and saved. And indeed, if he had no mind that we should come when we are called to him, why should he call us to come? Why hath he given us his word, his ministers, his ordinances, and all to invite and oblige us to repent and turn to him, if after all, he was resolved not to accept of us, nay would not have us come at all? Far be it from us that we should ever have such hard and unworthy thoughts of the great Creator and Governor of the world, especially considering that he hath told us the contrary, as plainly as it was possible for him to express his mind to us. I do not deny but that, according to the apostle, "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," Acts xv. 18; and there are several pas-

ST. JOHN VIII. 1—30.

sages in Scripture which intimate unto us God's eternal election of all that are truly pious to live with him for ever. But it is not for us to be so bold and impudent as to pry into the secrets of God, nor so curious as to search into his eternal and incomprehensible decrees; but we must still remember the words of Moses, "That secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of this law," Deut. xxix. 29. Whatsoever is necessary for us to believe or do, in order to our eternal salvation, is clearly revealed to us in the holy Scriptures, and therefore what we there read belongs unto us to know, neither are we to look any further than to his revealed will. But God in the Scriptures doth plainly tell us, not only in the places before quoted, but elsewhere, that he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—BEVERIDGE.

Let us take heed; for mercy is like a rainbow, which God set in the clouds to remember mankind; it shines here as long as it is not hindered; but we must never look for it after it is night, and it shines not in the other world. If we refuse mercy here, we shall have justice to eternity.—TAYLOR.

He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

—It was fit that our wise Creator should give us a law, and that law was both useful and pleasant to those who would carefully observe it; but

when once violated, there would necessarily arise a fatal enmity between the law and transgressors, an enmity which would continually become progressive and gather new strength in the progress; but as for our obstinacy what is it more than to kick against the pricks? The law is inviolably safe in its own sanctity, dignity, and immortality; but we, by striving against it, what we do gain but iniquity, disgrace, and death? So that if there were no umpire to interpose, there would be no hope but that the whole human kind should perish. But that blessed and efficacious intercessor came from on high; and certainly he was himself a Divine person, who could compose such a controversy, and who joining by an indissoluble union his infinitely better, with our miserable and mortal nature, did so, by a most wonderful method, render to the law all its accuracy of obedience, and to us, though guilty, impunity. And having thus made peace, that concord might afterwards continue and prevail, he animates all that partake of this blessed peace, by his own new, pure and Divine Spirit, that they might not only be engaged sincerely to endeavour diligently to observe the sacred precepts of the law, but might love them, and cordially embrace them; and, on the other hand, he hath tempered the severity of the law, towards all those that are received into favour, that their diligent, pious, and affectionate observance of the law, though not entirely complete, should by our indulgent Father be most graciously accepted, even as if it were perfect; and so the honour of the

ST. JOHN VIII. 31—59.

Divine Legislator is secured among men, and his peace descends upon them, and this is what our text observes, "there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."—
LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

How blest thy creature is, O God,
When with a single eye
He views the lustre of thy Word
The day-spring from on high.

Through all the storms that veil the skies,
And frown on earthly things,
He sees the Sun of Righteousness
With healing in his wings.

The soul, a dreary province once
Of Satan's dark domain,
Feels a new empire form'd within,
And owns a heavenly reign.

Shine ever, Lord, upon my heart,
And grace on me bestow,
Till in full light of perfect day
I all thy glory know.

COWPER.

§ CCL.

CHAP. VIII. 31—59.

Christ answereth the Jews that boasted of Abraham, and conveyeth himself from their cruelty.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed :

32 And ye shall know the truth, and ^{the} truth shall make you free.

33 ¶ They answered him, "We be Abraham's seed, and
4 v

were never in bondage to any man : how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free ?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^o Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And ^r the servant abideth not in the house for ever : *but* the son abideth ever.

36 ^r If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed ; but ^r ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 ^r I speak that which I have seen with my Father : and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, ^r Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 ^r But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, ^r which I have heard of God : this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication ; ^r we have one Father, *even* God.

42 Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would
705

love me : ^b for I proceeded forth and came from God ; ^c neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 ^d Why do ye not understand my speech ? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

44 ^e Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and ^f abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin ? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me ?

47 ^g He that is of God heareth God's words : ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not ^h well that thou art a Samaritan, and ⁱ hast a devil ?

49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil ; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50 And ^j I seek not mine own glory : there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^k If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. ^l Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our Father Abraham, which is dead ? and the prophets are dead : whom makest thou thyself ?

54 Jesus answered, ^m If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : ⁿ it is my Father that honoureth me ; of whom ye say, that he is your God :

55 Yet ^o ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I know him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham ^p rejoiced to see my day : ^q and he saw *it*, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, ^r I am.

59 Then ^s took they up stones to cast at him : but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the

temple, ' going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

m Rom. vi. 14, 18, 22; & viii. 2. Jam. i. 25; & ii. 12. —a Lev. xxv. 42. Mat. iii. 39.—g Rom. vi. 16, 20. 2 Pet. ii. 19.—p Gal. iv. 30.—q Rom. viii. 2. Gal. v. 1.—r ch. vii. 19. ver. 40.—s ch. iii. 32; & v. 19, 30; & xiv. 10. 24.—t Mat. iii. 9. ver. 33.—u Rom. ii. 28; & ix. 7. Gal. iii. 7, 29.—v ver. 37.—y ver. 28.—z Is. lxiii. 16; & lxiv. 8. Mal. i. 6.—a I John v. 1.—b ch. xvi. 26; & xvii. 8, 25.—c ch. v. 43; & vii. 28, 29.—d ch. vii. 17.—e Mat. xliii. 38. I John iii. 8.—f Jude vi.—g ch. x. 26, 27. I John iv. 6.—h ch. vii. 20; & x. 20. ver. 52.—i ch. v. 41; & vii. 18.—k ch. v. 24; & xi. 26.—l Zech. i. 5. Heb. xi. 13.—m ch. v. 31.—n ch. v. 41; & xvi. 14; & xvii. 1. Acts iii. 13.—o ch. vii. 29, 29.—p Luke x. 24.—q Heb. xi. 18.—r Ex. iii. 14. Is. xliii. 13. ch. xvii. 5, 24. Col. i. 17. Rev. i. 8.—s ch. x. 31, 39; & xi. 8.—t Luke iv. 30.

READER.—*Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*—If we regard our woful fall, which was the consequence of sin, we are all degenerate; we have all fallen from the highest honour into the greatest disgrace, and the deepest gulf of all sorts of misery; we have given away our liberty and greatest dignity, in exchange for the most shameful and most deplorable bondage; instead of the sons of God, we are become the slaves of Satan; and if we now want to know to what family we belong, the apostle will tell us, "That we are children of wrath, and sons of disobedience."—LEIGHTON.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.—As we are naturally subject to the vile drudgery of sin, so we are condemned to the proper "wages of sin," which the apostle tells us is "death," according to the just sentence of the law. But our Lord Jesus Christ was anointed for this purpose, "to set us free;" both to work and to publish liberty, to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to

them that are bound." Is. lxi. 1. Having paid our complete ransom, he sends his word as the message, and his Spirit to perform it effectually, to set us free, to let us know it, and to bring us out of prison. He was bound and scourged, as a slave or malefactor, to purchase us this liberty; therefore ought it to be our special care, first to have part in it, and then to be like it, and "stand fast in it," in all points.

But that we deceive not ourselves, as too many do who have no portion in this liberty, we ought to know that it is not *to* inordinate walking and licentiousness, as our liberty, that we are called, but *from* them, as our thralldom; we are not called from obedience, but to it.—LEIGHTON.

When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.—One great title which the Most High is pleased to give himself, and by which he is pleased to reveal himself to us, is the God of truth: so that I shall be so much the liker to the God of truth, by how much I am the more constant to the truth of God. And, the further I deviate from this, the nearer I approach to the nature of the devil, who is the father of lies, (John viii. 44,) and liars too. And hence it is, that of all the sins the men of fashion are guilty of, they can least endure to be charged with lying. To give a man the lie, or to say, You lie, is looked upon as the greatest affront that can be put upon them. And why so? But only because this sin of lying makes them so like

their father, the devil, that a man may as well call them devils, as liars: and therefore, to avoid the scandal as well as the dangerous malignity of this damnable sin, I am resolved, by the blessing of God, always to tune my tongue in unison to my heart, so as never to speak any thing but what I think really to be true, so that if ever I speak what is not true, it shall not be the error of my will, but of my understanding.—BEVERIDGE.

He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.—At first, man lost his innocence only in hope to get a little knowledge; and ever since then, lest knowledge should discover his error, and make him return to innocence, we are content to part with that now, and to know nothing that may discover or discountenance our sins, or discompose our secular designs. And as God made great revelations and furnished out a wise religion, and sent his Spirit to give the gift of faith to his church, that, on the foundation of faith, he may build a holy life; now our hearts love to retire into blindness, and sneak under covert of false principles, and run to a cheap religion, and an inactive discipline, and make a faith of our own, that we may build on it ease, and ambition, and a tall fortune, and the pleasures of revenge, and do what we have a mind to; scarce once in seven years denying a strong and an unruly appetite on the interest of a just conscience and holy religion.—TAYLOR.

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was,

708

I am.—He was, indeed, from all eternity; he lived in the bosom of the everlasting Father, and his life was most pure, most holy, most peaceable, most pleasant, most glorious; a life of infinite content, of infinite satisfaction, of infinite joy, and of infinite love; a life spent in eternal love of the great fountain of Divinity, the express image of which he was; a life employed in kind thoughts to poor mortals, and in Divine contrivances how their misery might be retrieved, their bands loosened, their danger overcome, their enemies vanquished, and their souls advanced to celestial mansions; a life undisturbed by the noise of wars, unacquainted with tumults, free from all annoyances, unmolested by the disorders of a giddy and confused world; a life of eternal calmness, which no waves, no billows, no wind, no storms, no tempests could discompose; a life of perfect serenity, and immense sweetness; a life employed in the eternal and incomprehensible enjoyment of his own perfection. Prov. i. This life Christ lived, before he was pleased to visit this benighted world with his healing beams. And it concerns us to remember this life, in order that, from the consideration of it, the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, in coming to dwell among us, may appear in the livelier colours.—HORNECK.

HYMN.

Oh, from the world's vile slavery
Almighty Saviour, set me free;
And, as my treasure is above,
Be there my thoughts, be there my love.
But oft, alas! too well I know,
My thoughts, my love, are fix'd below;

In ev'ry lifeless prayer I find
The heart unmov'd, the absent mind.

Oh, what that frozen heart can move
That melts not at a Saviour's love !
What can that sluggish spirit raise
That will not sing a Saviour's praise ?

Lord, draw my best affections hence,
Above this world of sin and sense ;
Cause them to soar beyond the skies,
And rest not till to Thee they rise !

COTTEBILL.

§ CCLI.

CHAP. IX. 1—23.

The man that was born blind restored to sight. He is brought to the Pharisees.

AND as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, ° who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind ?

3 *Jesus* answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents ; ° but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 ° I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, ° I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, ° he spat on the ground, and

made clay of the spittle, and he ² anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash / in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) ° He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 ¶ The neighbours there fore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged ?

9 Some said, This is he : others said, He is like him : *but* he said, I am *he*.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened ?

11 He answered and said, ° A man that is called *Jesus* made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he ? He said, I know not.

13 ¶ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath day when *Jesus* made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had re-

ceived his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, 'How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And ^a there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, 'He is a prophet.

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22 These words spake his parents, because ^b they feared the Jews: for the Jews had

agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he ^c should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

a ver. 24.—b ch. xi. 4.—c ch. iv. 24; & v. 19, 26; & xi. 9, & xii. 36; & xvii. 4.—d ch. i. 8, 9; & iii. 19; & viii. 12; & xii. 36, 46.—e Mark vii. 23; & viii. 23.—f Or, spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man.—g Neh. iii. 15.—h See 2 Kin. v. 14.—i ver. 8, 7.—j ver. 23, ch. iii. 2.—k ch. vii. 12, 43; & x. 19.—l ch. iv. 19; & vi. 14.—m ch. vii. 18; & xii. 42; & xix. 33. Acta v. 12.—n ver. 24, ch. xvi. 2.

READER.—*He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay; and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.*—The matter used was clay. Could there be a meaner? Could there be aught more unfit? O Saviour, how oft hadst thou cured blindnesses by thy word alone! how oft by thy touch! how easily couldst thou have done so here! Was this to show thy liberty, or thy power? liberty, in that thou canst at pleasure use variety of means, not being tied to any; power, in that thou couldst make use of contraries. The utter disproportion of this help to the cure, adds glory to the worker!

The clay is only put on to be washed off: and that not by every water: none shall do it but that of Siloam, which signifies sent; and if the man had not been sent to Siloam, he had been still blind. All things receive their virtue from Divine institution.—HALL.

He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.—What did this man think when his eyes were first given him? What a new world did he now find himself come into! How did he wonder at heaven and earth, and the faces and shapes of all

ST. JOHN IX. 1—23.

creatures, the cheerfulness of the light, the lively beams of the sun, the vast expansion of the air, the pleasant transparency of the water ! at the glorious piles of the temple and stately palaces of Jerusalem ! Every thing did not more please than astonish him. Lo ! thus shall we be affected, and more, when, the scales of our mortality being done away, we shall see as we are seen ; when we shall behold the blessedness of that other world, the glory of the saints and angels, the infinite majesty of the Son of God, the incomprehensible brightness of the all-glorious Deity ! O my soul, that thou couldst be taken up beforehand with the admiration of that which thou canst not as yet be capable of foreseeing !—HALL.

He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash ; and I went and washed, and I received sight.—The sun can make dark things clear, but it cannot make a blind man see them : but herein is the excellency of this sun, that he illuminates not only the *object* but the *faculty* ; doth not only reveal the mysteries of his kingdom, but opens blind eyes to behold them. And the first lineament of the renewed image of God in man, is that light in the understanding, removing not only that simple ignorance of Divine things, but those misconceits likewise, and false principles, and that wicked pertinacy, whereof man's mind is naturally full. He that at first "commanded light to shine out of darkness," infuseth saving knowledge and light into the dark soul of man, and

this light kindles love.—LEIGHTON.

He that now saw the light of the sun would not hide the light of truth from others. It is an unthankful silence to smother the works of God in secrecy. O God, we are not worthy of our spiritual eye-sight, if we do not publish thy mercies on the house-top, and praise thee in the great congregation !

How did this man know what Jesus did ? He was then stone blind ; what distinction could he yet make of persons, of actions ? True : but yet the blind man never wanted the assistance of other's eyes ; their relation hath assured him of the manner of his cure : besides the contribution of his other senses, his ear might perceive the spittle to fall, and hear the enjoined command ; his feeling perceived the cold and moist clay upon his lids ; all these conjoined gave sufficient warrant thus to believe, thus to report. Our ear is our best guide to a full apprehension of the works of Christ. The works of God the Father, his creation and government, are best known by the eye ; the works of God the Son, his redemption and mediation, are best known by the ear. O Saviour ! we cannot personally see what thou hast done here ! What are the monuments of thine apostles and evangelists but the relations of the blind man's guide, what and how thou hast wrought for us ? On these we strongly rely, these we do no less confidently believe, than if our very eyes had been witnesses of what thou didst and sufferedst upon earth.—HALL.

HYMN.

Light of those whose dreary dwelling
 Borders on the shade of death,
 Come, and all thy love revealing,
 Dissipate the clouds beneath.
 The new heaven and earth's creator,
 In our deepest darkness rise ;
 Scattering all the night of nature,
 Pouring day upon our eyes.

Still we wait for thine appearing,
 Life and joy thy beams impart ;
 Charming all our fears, and cheering
 Every meek and contrite heart.
 Come, and manifest the favour
 Thou hast for thy ransom'd race ;
 Come, thou kind and tender Saviour,
 Manifest thy Gospel grace !

Help us in thy great compassion,
 O, thou Prince of peace and love ;
 Shew us all thy great salvation,
 Raise our hearts to things above !
 By thine all-sufficient merit,
 Every burden'd soul release ;
 By the influence of thy Spirit,
 Guide us into perfect peace !

TOPLANDY.

§ CCLII.

CHAP. IX. 24—41.

The Pharisees are offended, and excommunicate the man ; but he is received by Jesus, and confesseth him. Who they are whom Christ enlighteneth.

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, ' Give God the praise : ' we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner *or no*, I know not : one thing I know,

712

that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee : how opened he thine eyes ?

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear *it* again ? will ye also be his disciples ?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are Moses' disciples.

29 We know that God spake unto Moses ; *as for this fellow*, ' we know not from whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, ' Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now we know that ' God heareth not sinners ; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33 ' If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, ' Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us ? And they ' cast him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on ^a the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and ^a it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 ¶ And Jesus said, ^a For judgment I am come into this world, ^a that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, ^b and said unto him, Are we blind also?

41 Jesus said unto them, ^c If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

^a Josh. vii. 19. 1 Sam. vi. 5.—^p ver. 16.—^q ch. viii. 14.—^r ch. iii. 10.—^s Job xxvii. 9; & xxxv. 12. Ps. xviii. 41; & xxiv. 16; & lxxi. 18. Prov. i. 28; & xv. 29; & xxviii. 9. Is. i. 16. Jer. xi. 11; & xiv. 12. Esak. viii. 18. Mic. iii. 4. Zeck. v. 13.—^t ver. 16.—^u ver. 2.—^v Or, *excommunicated* *him*. ver. 22.—^w Mat. xiv. 35; & xvi. 18. Mark i. 1. ch. x. 36. 1 John v. 18.—^x ch. iv. 26.—^y ch. v. 22. 27. See ch. iii. 17; & xii. 47.—^z Mat. xiii. 13.—^{aa} Rom. ii. 19.—^{ab} ch. xv. 22. 24.

READER.—*They reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.*—I do not see

the man beg any more when he once had his eyes: no burgher in Jerusalem was richer than he. I hear him stoutly defending that gracious author of his cure against the cavil of the malicious Pharisees: I see him, as a resolute confessor, suffering excommunication for the name of Christ, and maintaining the innocence and honour of so blessed a benefactor: I hear him read a divinity lecture to them that sat in Moses' chair, and convincing them of blindness who punished him for seeing.

How cannot I but envy thee, O happy man, who, of a patient, provest an advocate for thy Saviour! whose gain of bodily sight made way for thy spiritual eyes! who hast lost a synagogue, and found heaven! who, being abandoned of sinners, art received of the Lord of glory!—HALL.

And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.—It is ignorance of Christ that maintains the credit of those vanities we admire. The Christian that is truly acquainted with him, enamoured with the brightness of his beauty, can generously trample upon the smilings of the world, with the one foot, and her frownings with the other. If he be rich or honourable, or both, yet he glories not in that, but Christ, who is the "glory of the Lord" is even then his chiefest glory; and the light of Christ obscures that worldly splendour in his estimation. And as the enjoyment of Christ overtops all his other joys, so it overcomes his griefs. As that great light drowns the light of prosperity, it shines bright in the darkness of affliction; no dun-

geon so close that can keep out the rays of Christ's love from his beloved prisoners. The world can no more take away this light, than it can give it. "Unto the just ariseth light in darkness," saith the Psalmist, and, "when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me," says the Church, in Micah vii. 8.—LEIGHTON.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.—If it be here objected that Christ saith of himself, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them," and that he "came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,"—I answer, that there are two events of Christ's coming, and by consequence of his Gospel. The one principal, and by him intended; the other accidental and occasional, growing out of the ill disposition of the subject unto whom he was sent. The main and essential business of the gospel is to declare salvation, and to set open unto men a door of escape from the wrath to come; but when men willingly stand out, and neglect so great salvation, then, secondarily, doth Christ prove unto these men a stone of offence, and the gospel a Saviour of death unto death. As that portion which was intended for a cure by the physician, may, upon occasion of the indisposition of the body, and stubborn radication of the disease, hasten a man's end sooner than the disease itself would have done. So that, to be wicked, the word of God is a two-edged sword indeed, an edge in the law and

an edge in the gospel; they are on every side beset with condemnation; if they go to the law, that cannot save them, because they have broken it; if they go to the gospel, that will not save them, because they have contemned it.—REYNOLDS.

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.—By acting contrary to conscience, though misinformed and erroneous, we do contemn the authority and will of God; and, therefore, it is sin.

We are all to guide our consciences by the word, that is, God's written will; and we are all to guide our lives by our consciences. No man thinks his conscience to be erroneous; but thinks it to be according to the will of God. Now, if we do not act accordingly, we sin as much as if indeed it were informed according to the will of God. Conscience is God's deputy and vicegerent in the soul; and what conscience saith, we think it is God that commands, whether it be or not: and, to act contrary to it, is virtually and implicitly to disobey God; because we think what conscience speaks, God speaks, and therefore it is very sad to fall under the entanglements of an erroneous conscience; for then we are under a sad necessity of sinning on both hands: if we act according to it, we sin; and if we act not according to it, we sin. We should, therefore, above all things heartily beg and desire of God, who is the Lord of Conscience, that he would rightly inform our consciences in those things that are our duties; that so, by guid-

ST. JOHN X. 1—21.

ing our lives by our consciences, we may guide them according to his will.—HOPKINS.

HYMN.

Buried in shadows of the night
We lie, till Christ restores the light;
Wisdom descends to heal the blind,
And chase the darkness of the mind.

Our guilty souls are drown'd in fears,
Till his atoning blood appears;
Then we awake from deep distress,
And sing "The Lord our Righteousness."

Our very frame is mixed with sin,
His Spirit makes our nature clean;
Such virtues from his suff'rings flow,
At once to cleanse and pardon too.

Poor helpless worms in Thee possess
Grace, wisdom, power, and righteousness;
Thou art our mighty all, and we
Give our whole selves, O Lord, to Thee.

WATTS.

§ CCLIII.

CHAP. X. 1—21.

Christ is the door, and the good shepherd. Divers opinions of him.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

11, I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf

catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and 'know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

15 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: 'And I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And 'other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; 'and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, 'because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I 'have power to take it again. 'This commandment have I received of my Father.

19 ¶ "There was a division therefore among the Jews for these sayings.

20 And many of them said, 'He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath & devil. 'Can a devil 'open the eyes of the blind?

a ch. xiv. 6. Eph. ii. 18.—b Is. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxv. 12, 23; & xxxvii. 24. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 25; & v. 4.—c Zech. xi. 16, 17.—d 2 Tim. ii. 19.—e Mat. xi. 27.—f ch. xv. 13.—g Is. lvi. 8.—h Ezek. xxxvii. 22. Eph. ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 23.—i Is. lxxxviii. 7, 8, 12. Heb. ii. 9.—j ch. ii. 19.—k ch. vi. 28; & xv. 10. Acts ii. 24, 32.—l ch. vii. 45; & ix. 16.—m ch. vii. 20; & viii. 48, 52.—n Ex. iv. 11. Ps. xlv. 9; & cxlvi. 8.—p ch. ix. 6, 7, 32, 33.

READER.—*I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for the sheep.*—That Jesus Christ is, in doing and in suffering, our supreme and matchless example, and that he came to be so, is a truth; but that he is nothing further, and came for no other end, is a high point of falsehood. For how should man be enabled to learn and follow that example of obedience, unless there were more than an example in Christ? and what would become of that great reckoning of disobedience that man stands guilty of? No, these are notions far too narrow. He came to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and, for this purpose, had a body fitted for him and given him to bear this burden, to do this as the will of his Father, to stand for us instead of all offerings and sacrifices; and "by that will," says the Apostle, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." Heb. x. 10.

This was his business, not only to rectify sinful man by his example, but to redeem him by his blood. "He was a teacher come from God;" as a prophet, he teaches us the way of life, and, as the best and greatest of prophets, is perfectly like his doctrines: and his actions, (which in all teachers is the liveliest part of doctrine,) his carriage in life and death, is our great pattern and instruction. But what is said of his forerunner is more emi-

ST. JOHN X. 1—21.

nently true of Christ: he is "a Prophet, and more than a prophet; a Priest satisfying justice for us; and a King conquering sin and death for us; an example indeed, but more than an example,—our "sacrifice" and "our life," our "all in all." It is our duty to walk as he walked, to make him the pattern of our steps, 1 John i. 6; but our comfort and salvation lies in this, that "he is the propitiation for our sins," ver. 2. So, in the first chapter of that epistle, ver. 7, "We are to walk in the light; as he is in the light;" but for all our walking we have need of that which follows, that bears the great weight,—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." And so still, that glory which he possesseth in his own person is the pledge of ours. He is there for us; he lives "to make intercession for us," saith the Apostle, Heb. vii. 25; and "I go to prepare a place for you," says our Lord himself. John xiv. 2.
—LEIGHTON.

It was counted an ill sign amongst the heathens, when the beasts went unwillingly to be sacrificed, and drew back, and a good omen when they went willingly. But never was sacrifice so willing as our great sacrifice; and we may be assured he hath appeased his Father's wrath, and wrought atonement for us. Isaac was in this a type of Christ; we hear of no reluctance, he submitted quietly to be bound when he was to be offered up.
—LEIGHTON.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—More abundantly, that is, in the highest and most excellent

manner that it is possible for men to live; for this life which the Sun of righteousness raises believers to, is the life of righteousness, an holy, an heavenly, a spiritual, Divine life; it is the life of faith, whereby they live to other purposes, and in a quite different manner, from other men. They live to God, and not unto the world; they live in a constant dependance upon him, and submission to him; they live with a firm belief of his word, and sincere obedience to his laws; they live altogether in his service, so that "whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they still do it to the glory of God." 1 Cor. x. 31. In short, they strive all they can to do the will of God upon earth, as the holy angels do it in heaven, and so have their conversation there where their Saviour and their treasure is.

But this life is infused into them, only by the rays of the Sun of righteousness, by the holy Spirit which proceedeth from Christ, whereby they being born again, and made the children of light, thus walk in newness of life.—BEVERIDGE.

HYMN.

Jesus, shepherd of the sheep,
Powerful is thine arm to keep
All thy flock with safest care,
Fed in pastures large and fair.

Thee their guide and guard they own;
Thee they love and thee alone;
Thee they follow day by day
Fearful lest their feet should stray.

Lord, thy helpless sheep behold;
Gather all into thy fold;
Gently lead the wand'ers home;
Watch them, lest again they roam.

Bring thy sheep, now far astray,
Lost in Satan's evil way ;
Then, the fold and shepherd one,
We shall praise thee round the throne.

§ CCLIV.

CHAP. X. 22—42.

Jesus proveth by his works that he is Christ, the Son of God ; escapeth the Jews, and went again beyond Jordan, where many believed on him.

22 ¶ And it was at Jerusalem the 'feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple 'in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou 'make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: 'the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

26 But 'ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

27 " My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life ; and ' they shall never perish, neither shall any

man pluck them out of my hand.

29 ' My Father, ' which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30 ' I and my Father are one.

31 Then ' the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me ?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not ; but for blasphemy ; and because that thou, being a man, ' makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, ' Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods ?

35 If he called them gods, ' unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken ;

36 Say ye of him, ' whom the Father hath sanctified, and ' sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; ' because I said, I am ' the Son of God ?

37 ' If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, ' believe the works : that ye may know, and

believe, " that the Father is in me, and I in him.

39 * Therefore they sought again to take him : but he escaped out of their hand,

40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place * where John at first baptized ; and there he abode.

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle : * but all things that John spake of this man were true.

42 * And many believed on him there.

g I Mac. iv. 59.—r Acts iii. 11 ; & v. 12.—| Or. *hold us in suspense*—s ver. 28. ch. iii. 2 ; & v. 26.—f ch. viii. 47. I John iv. 6.—w ver. 4. 14.—x ch. vi. 27 ; & xviii. 11, 12 ; & xviii. 9.—y ch. xiv. 26.—z ch. xvii. 2, 6, &c.—a ch. xvii. 11, 22.—b ch. viii. 59.—c ch. v. 18.—d Ps. lxxviii. 6.—e Rom. xlii. 1.—f ch. vi. 27.—g ch. iii. 17 ; & v. 26, 27 ; viii. 42.—h ch. v. 17, 18. ver. 20.—i Luke i. 35. ch. ix. 26, 27.—j ch. xv. 24.—k ch. v. 26 ; & xiv. 10, 11.—l ch. xiv. 10, 11 ; & xvii. 21.—m ch. vii. 20, 44 ; & viii. 59.—n ch. i. 28.—o ch. iii. 20.—q ch. viii. 20 ; & xi. 45.

READER.—*My sheep hear my voice ; and I know them, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

—Christ keepeth his sheep, that none may be lost, and prayeth unto the Father to keep them, through his own name. John x. 12, 13 ; xvii. 11, 12. The Lord committed the Church unto Christ as their head ; gave them into his hands, not as an ordinary gift, wherein he did relinquish his own interest in them, or care of them, (for he careth for them still,) but as a

blessed trust : intrusted them with him, as the choicest of his jewels, as the most precious casket amongst all the treasures of the creation, that he should polish, preserve, present them faultless, and without spot before the presence of his glory at the last day. And for this purpose, he gave him a commandment of the greatest care and tenderness that ever the world knew, that he should lay down his life for his sheep, and should lose nothing of all that was given him, but should raise it up at the last day. John x. 18 ; vi. 39. So that now, want of care or compassion of Christ towards his Church would be an argument of unfaithfulness ; if he had not been a merciful High Priest, neither could he have been faithful to him that appointed him, for he was appointed to be merciful, and was by the Spirit of God filled with most tender affections, and qualified with a heart fuller of compassion than the sea is of waters, that he might commiserate the distresses of his people, and take care of their salvation.—REYNOLDS.

I and my Father are one.—The same names, properties, works, and worship, which, in Scripture, are ascribed to the Father, are frequently ascribed to the Son also in Scripture : the Father is called Jehovah in Scripture, so is the Son, Hos. i. 7 ; Jer. xxiii. 6 ; the Father is called God, so is the Son, John i. 1, " In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ;" with God as to his person : God as to nature. So also John xx. 28 ; Acts xx. 28, &c. Moreover, is the Father Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ? So is

ST. JOHN XI. 1—27.

the Son, Rev. i. 8. Is the Father eternal? So is the Son. Isa. ix. 6; Rev. i. 8. Is the Father Almighty? So is the Son. Heb. i. 3. Is the Father every where? So is the Son. Matt. xviii. 20. Doth the Father know all things? So doth the Son. John xxi. 17; ii. 24. Did the Father make all things? So did the Son. John i. 3. Doth the Father preserve all things? So doth the Son. Heb. i. 3. Doth the Father forgive sins? So doth the Son. Matt. ix. 6. Is the Father to be worshipped? So is the Son. Heb. i. 6. Is the Father to be honoured? So is the Son. John v. 23. No wonder therefore that Christ being thus "in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal with God."—BEVERIDGE.

Regenerate reason will teach me to subscribe to all those truths, which the unerring Spirit of the Holy God hath revealed in his sacred word, however contrary to the ratiocination of flesh and blood. Only this is the right reason, which is illuminated by God's Spirit, and willingly subjected to faith; which represents to me those things, which thou suggestest to me for unreasonable and impossible, as not feasible only, but most certain. That, in one Deity, there are three most glorious persons, distinguished in their subsistences, not divided in their substance; that, in one person of Christ the Mediator, there are two natures, Divine and human, not converted into each other, not confounded each with other; that the Creator of all things should become a creature; that a creature should be the mother of him that is her God;

720

however they be points, which carnal reason cannot put over; yet they are such, as reason illuminate and regenerate can both easily and most comfortably digest. "Great is the mystery of Godliness; God manifested in the flesh;" 1 Tim. iii. 16. What mystery were there in godliness, if the deepest secrets of religion did lie open to the common apprehension of nature?—HALL.

HYMN.

Jesus, thou shepherd of the sheep,
Thy little flock in safety keep!
The flock for which thou cam'st from heaven,
The flock for which thy life was given.

Oh, guard thy sheep from beasts of prey,
And keep them that they never stray;
Cherish the young; sustain the old,
Let none be feeble in thy fold.

Secure them from the scorching beam,
And lead them to the living stream;
In verdant pastures let them lie,
And watch them with a shepherd's eye.

Oh, may the sheep discern thy voice,
And in its sacred sound rejoice;
From strangers may they ever flee;
And know no other guide but thee.

Lord, bring thy sheep that wander yet,
And let the number be complete;
Then let thy flock from earth remove,
And occupy the fold above!

KELLY.

§ CCLV.

CHAP. XI. 1—27.

Christ raiseth Lazarus.

Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the

town of ^c Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (^a It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, ^c but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, ^c he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judæa again.

8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, ^c the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day? ^c If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But ^c if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them,

Our friend Lazarus ^a sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, ^c about fifteen furlongs off:

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even

now, ' whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, ' I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am ' the resurrection, and the " life : " he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live :

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this ?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord : ' I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

^a Luke x. 38, 39.—^b Mat. xxvi. 7. Mark xiv. 8. ch. xii. 8.—^c ch. ix. 3. ver. 40.—^d ch. x. 40.—^e ch. x. 31.—^f ch. ix. 4.—^g ch. xii. 35.—^h So Deut. xxxi. 16. Dan. xii. 2. Mat. ix. 24. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. xv. 18, 21.—ⁱ That is, about two miles.—^j ch. ix. 31.—^k Luke xiv. 14. ch. v. 29.—^l ch. v. 21; & vi. 39, 40, 44.—^m ch. i. 4; & vi. 35; & xiv. 6. Col. iii. 4. 1 John i. 1, 2; & v. 11.—ⁿ ch. iii. 26. 1 John v. 10, &c.—^o Mat. xvi. 16. ch. iv. 42. & vi. 14, 69.

He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.—The philosophers of old were wont to call sleep the brother of death; but God says, death is no other than sleep itself: a sleep, both sure and sweet. When thou liest down at night to thy repose, thou canst not be so certain to awake again in the morning, as, when thou layest thyself down in death, thou art sure to awake in the morning of the resurrection. Out of this bodily sleep thou mayest be affrightedly startled with some noises of sudden horror; with some fearful

dreams; with tumults, or alarms of war; but here, thou shalt rest quietly in the place of silence, Ps. xciv. 17, free from all inward and outward disturbances; while, in the mean time, thy soul shall see none but visions of joy and blessedness.

But, oh the sweet and heavenly expression of our last rest, and the issue of our happy resuscitation, which the gracious apostle hath laid forth, for the consolation of his mournful Thessalonians! " For, if we believe," saith he, " that Jesus died and rose again; even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Lo, our belief is antidote enough against the worst of death. And why are we troubled with death, when we believe that Jesus died? And what a triumph is this over death, that the same Jesus, who died, rose again! And what a comfort it is, that the same Jesus, who arose, shall both come again, and bring all his with him in glory! And, lastly, what a strong cordial is this to all good hearts, that all those who die well, do sleep in Jesus! Thou thoughtest, perhaps, of sleeping in the bed of the grave; and there, indeed, is rest: but he tells thee of sleeping in the bosom of Jesus, and there is immortality and blessedness.—HALL.

Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—Because the soul is an incomplete substance, and created in relation to the body, and is but a part of the whole man, if the body were as eternal and incorruptible as

the soul, yet the separation of the one from the other would be, as now it is, that which we call "natural death;" and supposing that God should preserve the body for ever, or restore it at the day of judgment to its full substance and perfect organs, yet the man would be dead for ever, if the soul for ever should continue separate from the body. So that the other life, that is, the state of resurrection, is a re-uniting soul and body. And although, in a philosophical sense, the resurrection is of the body, that is, a restitution of our flesh and blood and bones, and is called "resurrection," as the entrance into the state of resurrection may have the denomination of the whole; yet, in the sense of Scripture, the resurrection is the restitution of our life, the renovation of the whole man, the state of re-union; and until that be, the man is not, but he is dead, and only his essential parts are deposited and laid up in trust: and therefore, whatsoever the soul does or perceives in its incomplete condition, is but, to it, as embalming or honourable funerals to the body, and a safe monument to preserve it in order to a living again; and the felicities of the interval are wholly in order to the next life. And therefore, if there were to be no resurrection, as these intermedial joys should not be at all, so, as they are, they are but relative and incomplete: and therefore all our hopes, all our felicities, depend upon the resurrection; without it we should never be persons, men or women; and then the state

of separation could be nothing but a fantasm, trees ever in blossom, never bearing fruit; corn for ever in the blade, eggs always in the shell, a hope eternal, never to pass into fruition, that is, for ever to be deluded, for ever to be miserable. And therefore it was an elegant expression of St. Paul, "Our life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3; that is, our life is passed into custody, the dust of our body is numbered, and the spirit is refreshed, visited, and preserved in celestial mansions: but it is not properly called a life; for all this while the man is dead, and shall then live, when Christ produces this hidden life at the great day of restitution. But our faith of all this article is well wrapt up in the words of St. John: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. The middle state is not it which Scripture hath propounded to our faith, or to our hope; the reward is then when Christ shall appear: but, in the mean time, the soul can converse with God and with angels, just as the holy prophets did in their dreams, in which they received great degrees of favour and revelation.

But this is not to be reckoned any more than an entrance, or a waiting for the state of our felicity. And since the glories of heaven is the great fruit of election, we may consider that the body is not predestinate, nor the soul, alone, but the whole man; and, until the parts

ST. JOHN XI. 28—44.

embrace again in an essential complexion, it cannot be expected either of them should receive the portion of the predestinate. But the article and the event of future things is rarely set in order by St. Paul, "But ye are come unto the Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all;" and then follows, after this "general assembly," after the "Judge of all" appears, "to the spirits of just men made perfect;" Heb. vii. 22, 23, that is, re-united to their bodies, and entering into glory. The beginning of the contrary opinion brought some new practices and appendant persuasions into the church, or at least promoted them much. For those doctors, who, receding from the primitive belief of this article, thought that the glories of heaven are fully communicated to the souls before the day of judgment, did also upon that stock teach the invocation of saints, whom they believed to be received into glory, and insensibly also brought in the opinion of purgatory, that the less perfect souls might be glorified in the time that they assigned them. But the safer opinion, and more agreeable to piety, is that which I have now described from Scripture, and the purest ages of the church.

—TAYLOR.

HYMN.

I am the resurrection and the life.
 "I am (saith Christ, our glorious head,
 May we attention give!)
 The resurrection of the dead,
 The life of all that live."

Fulfil thy promise, gracious Lord,
 On us assembled here;
 Put forth thy Spirit, with the word,
 And cause the dead to hear.

Preserve the power of faith alive
 In those who love thy name;
 For sin and Satan daily strive
 To quench the sacred flame.

Thy power and mercy first prevail'd
 From death to set us free;
 And, often since, our life had fail'd,
 If not renewed by thee.

To thee we look, to thee we bow,
 To thee for help we call;
 Our life and resurrection thou,
 Our hope, our joy, our all.

NEWTON.

§ CCLVI.

CHAP. XI. 28—44.

Christ raiseth Lazarus, four days dead.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was

in that place where Martha met him.

31 ^p The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and ^t was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 ^q Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, ^r which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith

unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest 'see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but ^u because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and ^v his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

^p ver. 19.—^q ver. 21.—^t Gr. he troubled himself.—^r Luke xix. 41.—^s ch. ix. 6.—^u ver. iv. 23.—^v ch. ix. 20.—^w ch. xx. 7.

READER.—*She fell down at his feet, saying, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.*—The sisters are both in one mind, both in one speech; and

both of them, in one speech, bewray both strength and infirmity; strength of faith, in ascribing so much power to Christ, that his presence could preserve from death; infirmity, in supposing the necessity of a presence for this purpose. Why, Mary, could not thine omnipotent Saviour, as well in absence, have commanded Lazarus to live? Is his hand so short, that he can do nothing but by contraction? If his power were finite, how could he have forbidden the seizure of death? if infinite, how could it be limited to place, or hindered by distance? It is a weakness of faith to measure success by means, and means by presence, and to tie effects to both, when we deal with an Almighty agent. Finite causes work within their own sphere; all places are equally near, and all effects equally easy to the infinite. O Saviour, while thou now sittest gloriously in heaven, thou dost no less impart thyself unto us, than if thou stoodst viably by us, than if we stood locally by thee! no place can make difference of thy virtue and aid.

This was Mary's moan: no motion, no request sounded from her to her Saviour. Her silent suit is returned with a mute answer: no notice is taken of her error. O that marvellous mercy that connives at our faulty infirmities! All the reply that I hear of, is a compassionate groan with himself. O blessed Jesus, thou, that wert free from all sin, wouldest not be free from strong affections. Wisdom and holiness should want much work, if even

vehement passions might not be quitted from offence. Mary wept; her tears, drew on tears from her friends; all their tears united, drew groans from thee. Even in thine heaven, thou dost no less pity our sorrows; thy glory is free from groans, but abounds with compassion and mercy; if we be not sparing of our tears, thou canst not be insensible of our sorrows. How shall we imitate thee, if, like our looking-glass, we do not answer tears, and weep on them that weep on us!—HALL.

And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?—Lord, thou knowest (in absence) that Lazarus was dead, and dost thou not know where he was buried? Surely thou wert further off when thou sawest and reportedst his death, than thou wert from the grave thou inquiredst of: thou that knowest all things, yet askest what thou knowest: "Where have ye laid him?" not out of need, but out of will; that as in thy sorrow, so in thy question, thou mightst depress thyself in the opinion of the beholders for the time, that the glory of thine instant miracle might be the greater, the less it was expected. It had been all one to thy omnipotence to have made a new Lazarus out of nothing; or, in that remoteness, to have commanded Lazarus, wheresoever he was, to come forth:

but thou wert neither willing to work more miracle than was requisite, nor yet unwilling to fix the minds of the people upon the expectation of some marvellous thing that thou meantest to work; and therefore askest, "Where have ye laid him?"

They are not more glad of the question, than ready for the answer: "Come and see." More was hoped for from Christ than a mere view; they meant, and expected, that his eye should draw him on to some further action. O Saviour, while we desire our spiritual resuscitation, how should we labour to bring thee to our grave! How should we lay open our deadness before thee, and bewray to thee our impotence and senselessness! Come, Lord, and see what a miserable carcass I am; and, by the power of thy mercy, raise me from the state of my corruption.

Never was our Saviour more submissively dejected than now, immediately before he would approve and exalt the majesty of his Godhead. To his groans and inward grief he adds his tears. Anon they shall confess him a God; these expressions of passion shall onwards evince him to be a man. The Jews construe this well: "See how he loved him." Never did any thing but love fetch tears from Christ. But they do foully misconstrue Christ in the other: "Could not he, that opened the eyes of him that was born blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Yes, know ye, O vain and importune

questionists, that he could have done it with ease. To open the eyes of a man born blind, was more than to keep a sick man from dying: this were but to uphold and maintain nature from decaying; that were to create a new sense, and to restore a deficiency in nature. To make an eye, was no whit less difficult than to make a man: he that could do the greater might well have done the less. Ye shall soon see this was not the want of power. Had ye said, Why would he not? why did he not? the question had been fairer, and the answer no less easy—For his once greater glory. Little do ye know the drift, whether of God's acts or delays; and ye know as much as you are worthy. Let it be sufficient for you to understand, that he, who can do all things, will do that which shall be most for his own honour.—BP. HALL.

Lazarus, come forth.—O Saviour, while thou spakest to thy Father, thou liftedst up thine eyes; now thou art to speak unto dead Lazarus, thou liftedst up thy voice, and criedst aloud, "Lazarus, come forth." Was it that the strength of the voice might answer to the strength of the affection? since we faintly require what we care not to obtain, and vehemently utter what we earnestly desire: was it, that the greatness of the voice might answer to the greatness of the work? Was it, that the hearers might be witnesses of what words were used in so miraculous an act—no magical incantations, but authoritative and Divine commands? Was it to signify, that Lazarus's soul,

was called from far? The speech must be loud that shall be heard in another world. Was it in relation to the estate of the body of Lazarus, whom thou hadst reported to sleep? since those that are in a deep and dead sleep cannot be awakened without a loud call. Or was it in a representation of that loud voice of the last trumpet, which shall sound into all graves, and raise all flesh from their dust? Even so still, Lord, when thou wouldst raise a soul from the death of sin and grave of corruption, no easy voice will serve. Thy strongest commands, thy loudest denunciations of judgments, the shrillest and sweetest promulgations of thy mercies, are but enough.

How familiar a word is this, "Lazarus, come forth!" No other than he was wont to use while they lived together. Neither doth he say, Lazarus, revive; but, as if he supposed him already living, "Lazarus, come forth:" to let them know that those who are dead to us, are to and with him alive; yea, in a more entire and feeling society, than while they carried their clay about them. Why do I fear that separation which shall more unite me to my Saviour?

Neither was the word more familiar than commanding: "Lazarus, come forth." Here is no suit to his Father, nor adjuration to the deceased, but a flat and absolute injunction, "Come forth." O Saviour, that is the voice that I shall once hear sounding into the bottom of my grave, and raising me up out of my dust; that is the voice that shall

pierce the rocks and divide the mountains, and fetch up the dead out of the lowest depths. Thy word made all, thy word shall repair all. Hence, all ye diffident fears! He whom I trust is omnipotent.—
HALL.

And he that was dead came forth.
—It was much to turn water into wine; but it was more to feed five thousand with five loaves. It was much to restore the ruler's son; it was more to cure him that had been thirty-eight years a cripple. It was much to cure him that was born blind; it was more to raise up Lazarus that had been so long dead. As a stream runs still the stronger and wider, the nearer it comes to the ocean whence it was derived; so didst thou, O Saviour, work the more powerfully the nearer thou drewest to thy glory. This was, as one of thy last, so of thy greatest miracles: when thou wert ready to die thyself, thou raisedst him to life who smelt strong of the grave. None of all the sacred histories is so full and punctual as this, in the report of all circumstances. Other miracles do not more transcend nature, than this transcends other miracles.

This alone was a sufficient eviction of thy godhead, O blessed Saviour! None but an infinite power could so far go beyond nature, as to recall a man four days dead, from not a mere privation, but a settled corruption. Earth must needs be thine, from which thou rescuest his body; heaven must needs be thine, from whence thou fetchest his spirit. None but he that created man,

could thus make him new.—Br. HALL.

HYMN.

Blest be the everlasting God,
The Father of our Lord;
Be his abounding mercy prais'd,
His Majesty ador'd.

When from the dead he rais'd his Son,
And call'd him to the sky,
He gave our souls a lively hope
That they should never die.

What though our inbred sins require
Our flesh to see the dust;
Yet, as the Lord our Saviour rose,
So all his followers must.

There's an inheritance divine
Reserv'd against that day;
'Tis uncorrupted, undefil'd,
And cannot fade away.

Saints by the power of God are kept
Till their salvation come;
We walk by faith as pilgrims here,
Till Christ shall call us home.

WARRS.

§ CCLVII.

CHAP. XI. 45—57.

Many Jews believe. The high priests and Pharisees gather a council against Christ. Caiaphas prophesieth. Jesus hid himself. At the passover they enquire after him, and lay wait for him.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and

told them what things Jesus had done.

47 ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, ' What do we ? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him : and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ;

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews ; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and

there continued with his disciples.

55 ¶ ^a And the Jews' pass-over was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the pass-over, to purify themselves.

56 'Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast ?

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

^g ch. ii. 23; & x. 42; & xii. 11, 18.—^s Ps 11. 2. Mat. xxvi. 8. Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 2.—^a ch. xii. 19. Acts iv. 16.—^b Luke iii. 2. ch. xviii. 14. Acts iv. 6.—^c ch. xviii. 14.—^d 1s. xlix. 6. 1 John ii. 2.—^e ch. x. 16. Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16, 17.—^f ch. iv. 1, 3; & vii. 1.—^g See 2 Chr. xiii. 19.—^h ch. ii. 13; & v. 1; & vi. 4.—ⁱ ch. xi. 7.

READER.—*Then many of the Jews believed.*—If I should come to a man, that is ignorant of these fruitful productions of the earth; and, shewing him a little naked grain, should tell him, "This, which thou seest, shall rot in the ground; and, after that, shall rise up a yard high into divers stalks, and every stalk shall bear an ear, and every ear shall yield twenty or thirty such grains as itself is;" or, showing him an acorn, should say, "This shall be buried in the earth, and, after that, shall rise up twenty or thirty foot high, and shall spread so far as to give comfortable shade to a hundred persons;" surely, I should

not win belief from him; yet our experience daily makes good these ordinary proofs of the wonderful providence of the Almighty. Or, should I show a man, that is unacquainted with these great marvels of nature, the small seed of the silkworm, lying scattered upon a paper, and seemingly dead all winter long; and should tell him, "These little atoms, so soon as the mulberry tree puts forth, will yield a worm, which shall work itself into so rich a house, as the great princes of the earth shall be glad to shelter themselves with; and, after that, shall turn to a large fly, and in that shape shall live to generate, and then speedily die;" I should seem to tell incredible things; yet this is so familiar to the experienced, that they cease to wonder at it. If, from these vegetables, we should cast our eyes upon some sensitive creatures, do we not see snails, and flies, and some birds, lie as senseless and lifeless all the winter time; and yet, when the spring comes, they recover their wonted vivacity?

Besides these resemblances, have we not many clear instances and examples of our resurrection? Did not the touch of Elisha's bones raise up the partner of his grave? 2 Kings xiii. 21. Was not Lazarus called up out of his sepulchre, after four days' possession, and many noisome degrees of rottenness? Were not the graves opened of many bodies of the saints which slept? Did not they arise and come out of their graves, after my Saviour's resurrection, and go into the holy city,

ST. JOHN XII. 1—19.

and appear unto many? Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. Besides examples, have we not an all-sufficient pledge of our certain rising again, in the victorious resurrection of the Lord of life? Is he not our head? Are not we his members? Is he not the firstfruits of them that slept? 1 Cor. xv. 20. Did he not conquer death for us? 1 Cor. xv. 57. Can the head be alive and glorious, while the limbs do utterly perish in a final corruption? Certainly then, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." 1 Thess. iv. 14.—HALL.

He prophesied that he should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.—The death, here spoken of, is the death of the Lord, the Almighty and eternal Son of God; that death which he suffered in the nature, and in the stead, of mankind in general; and particularly of us who are here present; that death, whereby he expiated our sins, and made complete satisfaction to the Divine truth and justice for them: that death, whereby he appeased the wrath which he that made us had justly conceived against us, and hath reconciled him again unto us: that death, whereby he delivered us from the slavery of sin and Satan, and asserted us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: that death, whereby he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made himself a curse for us: that death, whereby he purchased for us both pardon and peace, and

mercy, and grace, and power to eschew evil and do good, and all the blessings we can ever have or desire, either in this world or the next; that death, by virtue whereof he entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us; and therefore is able to save to the utmost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

HYMN.

Sprinkled with reconciling blood
I dare approach thy throne, O God!
Thy face no frowning aspect wears,
Thy hand no vengeful weapon bears.

Let me my grateful homage pay,
With courage sing, with freedom pray;
And, though myself a wretch undone,
Hope for acceptance through thy Son.

Thy Son who, on the accursed tree,
Expir'd to set the vilest free;
On this I build my only claim,
And all I ask is in his name.

BEDDOME.

§ CCLVIII.

CHAP. XII. 1—19.

Jesus excuseth Mary anointing his feet. The people flock to see Lazarus. The high priests consult to kill him. Christ rideth into Jerusalem.

THEN Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 ^b There they made him a

ST. JOHN XII. 1—19.

supper ; and Martha served : but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took ^c Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair : and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor ?

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor ; but because he was a thief, and ^d had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone : against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

8 For ^e the poor always ye have with you ; but me ye have not always.

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there : and they came not^f for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, ^g whom he had raised from the dead.

10 ¶ ^h But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death :

11 ⁱ Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went

away, and believed on Jesus.

12 ¶ ^j On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, ^k Hosanna : Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

14 ^l And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon ; as it is written,

15 ^m Fear not, daughter of Sion : behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things ⁿ understood not his disciples at the first : ^o but when Jesus was glorified, ^p then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

18 ^q For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ^r Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing : behold, the world is gone after him.

ST. JOHN XII. 20—36.

a ch. xi. 1, 48.—b Mat. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3.—c Luke x. 36, 39. ch. xi. 2.—d ch. xiii. 29.—e Mat. xxvi. 11. Mark xiv. 7.—f ch. xi. 43, 44.—g Luke xvi. 31.—h ch. xi. 45, ver. 16.—i Mat. xxi. 8. Mark xi. 8. Luke xix. 35, 36, &c. k Pa cxviii. 25, 26.—l Mat. xxi. 7.—m Zech. ix. 9.—n Luke xviii. 34.—o ch. vii. 39.—p ch. xiv. 26.—q ver. 11.—r ch. xi. 47, 48.

See Matthew XXVI. 6—13.

§ LXXXII.

And Matthew XXI. 1—11.

§ LXVI.

§ CCLIX.

CHAP. XII. 20—36.

Greeks desire to see Jesus. He foretelleth his death.

20 ¶ And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast :

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew : and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

23 ¶ And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world

shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

27 Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered : others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

31 Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever : and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up ? who is this Son of man ?

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the

light with you. " Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for " he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be ' the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and ' did hide himself from them.

Acts xvii. 4.—1 Kin. viii. 41, 42. Acts viii. 27.—Mat. i. 44.—*c* ch. xiii. 32; & xvii. 1.—*p* 1 Cor. xv. 36.—*s* Mat. x. 39; & xvi. 25. Mark viii. 35. Luke ix. 24; & xvii. 33.—*s* ch. xiv. 3; & xvii. 24. 1 Thes. iv. 17.—*s* Mat. xxvi. 48, 49. Luke xii. 50. ch. xiii. 21.—*c* Luke xxii. 53. ch. xviii. 37.—*s* Mat. iii. 17.—*c* ch. xi. 42.—*f* Mat. xii. 29. Luke x. 18. ch. xiv. 30; & xvi. 11. Acts xvi. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 2; & vi. 12.—*c* ch. iii. 14; & viii. 28.—*s* Rom. v. 18. Heb. ii. 9.—*c* ch. xviii. 32.—*s* Ps. lxxix. 36, 37; & cx. 4. Is. ix. 7; & llii. 8. Ezek. xxxvii. 25. Dan. ii. 44; & vii. 14, 27. Mic. iv. 7.—*c* ch. i. 9; & viii. 12; & ix. 5. ver. 46.—*m* Jer. xlii. 16. Eph. v. 8.—*s* ch. xi. 10. 1 John ii. 11.—*s* Luke xvi. 8. Eph. v. 8. 1 Thes. v. 5. 1 John ii. 9, 10, 11.—*p* ch. viii. 59. & xi. 54.

READER.—*If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be.*—As for these several graces and virtues, which our souls must be adorned withal, before ever they can come to heaven, though it be easy to talk of them, it is not so to act them. I shall instance only in some few; as, to love God above all things, and other things only for God's sake; to hope in nothing but God's promises, and to fear nothing but his displeasure; to love other men's persons so as to hate their vices, and so to hate their vices as still to love their persons; not to covet riches when we have them not, nor trust on them when we have them; to deny ourselves that we may please God, and to take up our cross that we may follow Christ; to live above

the world whilst we are in it, and to despise it whilst we use it; to be always upon our watch and guard, strictly observing not only the outward actions of our life, but the inward motions of our hearts; to hate those very sins, which we used to love, and to love those very duties which we used to hate; to choose the greatest affliction before the least sin, and to neglect the getting of the greatest gain, rather than the performing of the smallest duty; to believe truths which we cannot comprehend, merely upon the testimony of one whom we never saw; to submit our own will to God's, and to delight ourselves in obeying him; to be patient under sufferings, and thankful for all the troubles we meet with here below; to be ready and willing to do and suffer any thing we can, for him who hath done and suffered so much for us; to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the indigent, and rescue the oppressed to the utmost of our power: in a word, to be every way as pious towards God, as obedient to Christ, as loyal to our prince, as faithful to our friends, as loving to our enemies, as charitable to the poor, as just in our dealings, as eminent in all true graces and virtues, as if we were to be saved by it, and yet put no confidence in it, but still look upon ourselves as unprofitable servants, and depend upon Christ, and Christ alone, for pardon and salvation.—BEVERIDGE.

Let us consider, that though it be never so hard to get to heaven, yet it is possible; and though there be

but few that come thither, yet there are some ; and why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others ? There are many perfect and glorious saints in heaven at this moment, which were once sinful creatures upon earth as we are now ; but it seems the way thither was not so narrow but they could walk in it, nor the gate so strait but they could pass through it ; and why may not we as well as they ? We have the same natures whereby we are capable of happiness as they had ; we have the same Scriptures to direct us to it as they had ; we have the same promises of assistance as they had ; we have the same Saviour as they had, and why then may we not get to the same place where they are ? Is the way more narrow, and the gate more strait, to us than it was to them ? No, surely it is every way the same. Why then should we despair of ever attaining everlasting glory, seeing we are as capable of it as any one who hath yet attained it ? It is true, if no mortal man had ever got to heaven, or God had said none ever can get thither, then indeed it would be in vain in us to expect it, or to use any means to attain it : but, seeing many of our brethren are already there, and many more will follow after them, and we are as capable of coming to them as any other, the straitness of the gate, the narrowness of the way, or the difficulty of getting thither, should never discourage us from endeavouring after it, no more than it did them, but rather make us more diligent in the prosecution of it : especially considering, in the next place, that we are not

only, as yet, in a capacity of getting to heaven, but we are all invited thither, and that by God himself, for he would have all men to be saved, and to " come unto the knowledge of the truth." Tim. ii. 4. Yet he hath sworn by himself, saying, " As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his ways and live ;" and therefore calls upon us all, " Turn ye, Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Hence it is that he sent his prophets to invite us, " Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Isaiah lv. 1. Yea, he came down in his own person to earth, on purpose to invite us to heaven, and to direct us the way thither : " Come to me," saith he, " all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 29. For " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. Whence we may observe that there is no exception made against any person whatsoever, nor, by consequence, against any of us. It is the will, yea, and command of God too, that we all turn from our evil way and live, and that every soul amongst us walk in that narrow way that leads to eternal bliss ; and therefore, if any of us do perish, " Our blood will be upon our own heads, our destruction is from ourselves." Hos. xiii. 9. For it is nothing but the perverseness of our hearts that can keep any soul of us out of heaven, however difficult it is to come thither.—BEVERIDGE.

I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.—All true and lively faith begets love; and thus that heavenly light is the vehicle of heat: and as, by this means, true faith has a tendency to the practice of obedience, so all true obedience depends upon faith, and flows from it; but it also proceeds from love, because faith first produces love, and then works by it. All knowledge of mysteries is vain, and of no value, unless it have an influence upon the affections, and thereby on the whole conduct of life. The luminaries of heaven are placed on high; but they are so placed, that they may shine, and perform their periods, for the benefit of this earth.—LEIGHTON.

There is no true faith in the doctrine of salvation, unless it be attended with this magnetic force by which it draws the soul to God. One would think it should be impossible, where this effect is not produced, that there should be so much as an historical faith; and surely it is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the rational nature, to see so desirable and excellent a good laid down as it were before us, and freely offered, without running most freely to embrace it, with open arms, and an ardent impetuosity of soul.

The faith therefore of vulgar and merely nominal Christians is quite dead, and deserves not the name of faith at all. I mean that which is not sufficient to excite them earnestly to desire and expect that Divine grace which they say they believe. True and lively faith is the eye of the inner man, which beholds an infinitely amiable God, the lucid and perpetual

fountain of grace, and by the view is immediately kindled into the most fervent love. That Divine light which is sent from heaven into the soul, is the vehicle of heat too, and, by its ardent rays, presently sets the heart on fire; the flame rises sublime, and bears all the affections of the mind with it to that consummate beauty which it renders visible.—LEIGHTON.

Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.—If we neglect the opportunities of grace, and refuse to hear the voice of Christ in the time of mercy and divine appointment, we may arrive at that state of misery, in which Christ will refuse to speak one word of comfort to us; and the homilies of the Gospel shall be dead letters, and the spirit not at all refreshed, nor the understanding instructed, nor the affections moved, nor the will determined; but because we have, during all our time, stopped our ears, in his time God will stop his mouth, shut up the springs of grace, that we shall receive no refreshment, or instruction, or pardon, or felicity.—TAYLOR.

HYMN.

Leader of faithful souls, and guide
Of all that travel to the sky,
Come, and with us, even us, abide,
Who would on thee alone rely;
On thee alone our spirits stay
While held in life's uneven way.

Strangers and pilgrims here below,
This earth, we know, is not our place;
We hasten through the vale of woe,
And, restless to behold thy face,
Swift to our heavenly country move,
Our everlasting home above.

Rais'd by the breath of love Divine,
 We urge our way with strength renew'd;
 The church of the firstborn to join,
 We travel to the mount of God.
 With joy upon our heads, we rise
 To meet our Captain in the skies.

§ CCLX.

CHAP. XII. 37—50.

The Jews are generally blinded; yet many chief rulers believe, but do not confess him: therefore Jesus calleth earnestly for confession of faith.

37 ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, ' Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 ' He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41 ' These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

42 ¶ Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed

on him; but ' because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43 " For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 ¶ Jesus cried and said, ' He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 And ' he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 ' I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, " I judge him not: for ' I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 ' He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: ' the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

49 For ' I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, ' what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

ST. JOHN XIII. 1—17.

g Is. liii. 1. Rom. x. 16.—*f* Is. vi. 9, 10. Mat. xiii. 14.—*s* Is. vi. 1.—*f* ch. vii. 15, & xi. 22.—*s* ch. v. 44.—*f* Mark ix. 37; 1 Pet. i. 21.—*g* ch. xiv. 9.—*s* v. 56, 26; ch. iii. 19; & viii. 12; & ix. 5, 30.—*s* ch. v. 45; & viii. 15, 26.—*b* ch. iii. 17.—*f* Luke x. 16.—*f* Deut. xviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16.—*s* ch. viii. 38; & xiv. 19.—*f* Deut. xviii. 19.

See Matthew XIII. 14, 15, in § XLIV.

And Chapter VIII. 12, in § CCXLIX.

§ CCLXI.

CHAP. XIII. 1—17.

Jesus washeth the disciples' feet : exhorteth them to humility and charity.

Now ^a before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that ^b his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And supper being ended, ^c the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him;

3 Jesus knowing ^d that the Father had given all things into his hands, and ^e that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 ^f He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began

to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and ^g Peter saith unto him, Lord, ^h dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; ⁱ but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, ^j if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ^k ye are clean, but not all.

11 For ^l he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 ^m Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

14 ⁿ If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your

ST. JOHN XIII. 1—17.

feet, ' ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For ' I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 ' Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 ' If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

e Mat. xxvi. 2.—b ch. xii. 23; & xvii. 1, 11.—c Luke xiii. 8; ver. 27.—d Mat. xi. 27; & xxviii. 18, ch. iii. 35; & xvii. 2. Acts ii. 36. 1 Cor. xv. 27. Heb. ii. 8.—e ch. viii. 42; & xvi. 25.—f Luke xxii. 27. Phil. ii. 7, 8. † Gr. Ac.—g See Mat. iii. 14.—h ver. 12.—i ch. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Eph. v. 28. Tit. iii. 5. Heb. x. 22.—k ch. xv. 3.—l ch. vi. 64.—m Mat. xxiii. 8, 10. Luke vi. 46. 1 Cor. viii. 6; & xii. 3. Phil. ii. 11.—n Luke xxii. 27.—o Rom. xii. 10. Gal. vi. 1, 2. 1 Pet. v. 5.—p Mat. xi. 20. Phil. ii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 31. 1 John ii. 6.—q Mat. x. 24. Luke vi. 40. ch. xv. 20.—r James i. 25.

READER.—*If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet.*—The best measure of grace is humility: for, the more grace still the greater humility; and, no humility no grace. Solomon observed of old, and St. James took it from him, that, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble;" Prov. iii. 34; James iv. 6; so as he, that is not humble, is not so much as capable of grace; and he that is truly humble, is a fit subject for all graces.—HALL.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.—This is the power of religion, the new impress of God upon the heart, and obedience and resignation to him, to be given up to him as entirely his, to be moulded and ordered as he will, to be subject

to his laws and appointments in all things, to have every action and every word under a rule and law, and the penalty to be so high, even eternal death. All this, to a carnal or haughty mind is hard; not only every action and word, but even every thought too, must be subject, not so much as thought free, "every thought is brought into captivity," 2 Cor. x. 5, as the apostle speaks, and so the licentious man accounts it; not only the affections and desires, but the very reasoning and imaginations are brought under this law.

Now, to yield this as reasonable and due to God, to own his sovereignty, and to acknowledge the law to be holy, and just, and good, to approve it, yea to love it, even there where it most contradicts and controuls our own corrupt will, and the law of sin in our flesh, this is true spiritual obedience; to study and enquire after the will of God in all our ways, what will please him, and having found it, to follow that which is here called "the way of his commandments;" to make this "our way" and our business in the world, and all other things but accessaries and bye-works; even those lawful things that may be taken in, and used as helps in our way. As the disciples passing through the corn plucked the ears, and did eat in passing, as a bye-work, but their business was to follow their Master. And whatsoever would hinder us in this way, must be watched and guarded against. To effect that, we must either remove and thrust it aside, or if we cannot do that, yet we must go over it and trample it under foot,

ST. JOHN XIII. 18—38.

were it the thing or the person that is dearest to us in the world. Till the heart be brought to this state and purpose, it is either wholly void of, or very low and weak in, the truth of religion.—LEIGHTON.

Oh! where are souls to be found amongst us, that represent their own original, that are possest with pure and sublime apprehensions of God the Father of Spirits, and are often raised to the astonishing contemplation of his eternal and blessed being, and his infinite holiness, and greatness, and goodness, and are accordingly burnt up with ardent love? And where that holy fire is wanting, there can be no sacrifice, whatsoever our invention, or utterance, or gifts may be, and how blameless soever the externals of our life may be, and even our hearts free from gross pollutions; for it is scarce to be suspected that any of us will suffer any of those strange, yea, infernal fires of ambition, or avarice, or malice, or impure lusts and sensualities to burn within us, which would render us priests of idols, of airy nothings, and of dunghill gods, yea of the very "god of this world, the prince of darkness." Let men judge us and revile us as they please, that imports nothing at all; but God forbid any thing should possess our hearts but he that loved us, and gave himself for us; for we know we cannot be vessels of honour meet for the master's use, "unless we purge ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," and empty our hearts of all things beside him, and even of ourselves, and our own will, and have no more any desires or delights, but his will alone,

740.

and his glory, who is our peace, and our life, and our all.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

He loved them unto the end.

Lord, on thy promise I depend,
And still to trust in it desire,
That thou wilt love me to the end,
Be with me in temptation's fire.
Wilt for me work, and in me too,
Wilt guide me right, and bring me through.

No other stay have I beside;
If thou canst alter, I must fall:
I look to Thee to be supplied
With life, with will, with power, with all.
Rich souls may glory in their store,
But Jesus will relieve the poor.

HART.

§ CCLXII.

CHAP. XIII. 18—38.

Jesus foretelleth, and discovereth to John by a token, that Judas should betray him; commandeth them to love one another, and forewarneth Peter of his denial.

18 ¶ I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, 'He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

19 "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

20 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me;

and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

21 *When Jesus had thus said, * he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that * one of you shall betray me.

22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 Now * there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it ?

26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a * sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon.*

27 * And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some of *them* thought, because * Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast ; or,

that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop went immediately out : and it was night.

31 ¶ Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, * Now is the Son of man glorified, and * God is glorified in him.

32 / If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and * shall straight-way glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : * and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you.

34 ' A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 * By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 ¶ Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou ? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now ; but ' thou shalt follow me afterwards.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now ? I will * lay down my life for thy sake.

38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my

sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Ps. xli. 9. Mat. xxvi. 23. ver. 21.—f ch. xiv. 29; & xvi. 4.—j Or, From henceforth.—g Mat. x. 40; & xxv. 40. Luke x. 16.—e Mat. xxvi. 21. Mark xiv. 18. Luke xxii. 21.—y ch. xii. 27.—s Acts i. 17. 1 John ii. 19.—a ch. xix. 28; & xx. 2; & xxi. 7, 20, 24.—l Or, morsel.—b Luke xxii. 3. ch. vi. 70.—c ch. xii. 6.—d ch. xii. 23.—e ch. xiv. 18. 1 Pet. iv. 11.—f ch. xvii. 1, 4, 6, 6.—g ch. xii. 23.—h ch. vii. 34; & viii. 21.—i Lev. xix. 18. ch. xv. 12, 17. Eph. v. 2. 1 Thes. iv. 9. Jam. 8. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John ii. 7, 8; & iii. 11, 28; & iv. 21.—A 1 John ii. 5; & iv. 20.—/ ch. xxi. 18. 2 Pet. i. 14.—m Mat. xxvi. 33, 34, 35. Mark xiv. 29, 30, 31. Luke xxii. 33, 34.

See Matthew XXXI. 14—16, in § LXXXII.

John XV. 12, in § CCLXV; and John XVII. 1—5, in § CCLXIX.

§ CCLXIII.

CHAP. XIV. 1—14.

Christ comforteth his disciples with the hope of heaven; professeth himself the way, the truth, and the life, and one with the Father: asureth their prayers in his name to be effectual.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. ^b I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, ^c I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that ^d where I am, *there* ye may be also.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am ^e the way, ^f the truth, and ^g the life: ^h no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

7 ⁱ If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? ^j he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that ^k I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you ^l I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: ^m or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 ⁿ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 ^r And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

a ver. 27. ch. xvi. 33.—d ch. xiii. 35, 36.—c ver. 18, 26. Acts i. 11.—d ch. xii. 26; & xvii. 24. 1 Thes. iv. 17.—e Heb. ix. 8.—f ch. i. 17; & viii. 32.—g ch. i. 4; & xi. 25.—h ch. x. 9.—i ch. viii. 19.—j ch. xii. 45. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3.—k ver. 20. ch. x. 38; & xvii. 21, 23.—m ch. v. 19; & vii. 16; & viii. 26; & xii. 49.—n ch. v. 36; & x. 38.—o Mat. xxi. 21. Mark xvi. 17. Luke x. 17.—p Mat. vii. 7; & xxi. 22. Mark xi. 24. Luke xi. 9. ch. xv. 7. 16; & xvi. 23, 24. James i. 5. 1 John iii. 22; & v. 14.

READER.—*Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.*—It cannot be spoken how injurious those men are to themselves, that will be managing their own cares; and plotting the prevention of their fears; and projecting their own, both indemnity and advantages: for, as they lay an unnecessary load upon their own shoulders, so they draw upon themselves the miseries of an irremediable disappointment. Alas, how can their weakness make good those events, which they vainly promise to themselves; or avert those judgments they would escape; or uphold them in those evils they must undergo? Whereas, if we put all this upon a gracious God, he contrives it with ease, looking for nothing from us, but our trust and thankfulness.—HALL.

We are naturally apt, in our necessities, to have recourse to greater powers than our own; even where we have no engagement of their help: how much more should we cast ourselves upon the Almighty, when he not only allows, but solicits our reliance upon him!

It was a question, that might have befitted the mouth of the best Christian, which fell from Socrates: "Since God himself is careful for thee, why art thou solicitous for thyself?" If evils were let loose upon us, so as it were possible for us to suffer any thing that God were not aware of, we might have just cause to sink under adversities; but now that we know every drachm of our affliction is weighed out to us, by that all-wise and all-merciful Providence, Oh, our infidelity, if we do make scruple of taking in the most bitter dose!—HALL.

In my Father's house are many mansions, &c.—The man after God's own heart had one boon to ask of his Maker: it must be, sure, some great suit, wherein a favourite will set up his rest: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require: even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life; to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his holy temple," Psalm xxvii. 4. Was it so contenting a happiness to thee, O David, to behold, for a moment of time, the fair beauty of the Lord in his earthly temple, where he meant not to reveal the height of his glory? How blessed art thou now, when thy soul lives for ever in the continual prospect of the Infinite Beauty and Majesty of God, in the most glorious and eternal sanctuary of heaven! It was but in a cloud and smoke, wherein God shewed himself in his material house; above, thou seest him clothed in a heavenly and incomprehensible light: and, if a little

glimpse of celestial glory, in a momentary transfiguration, so transported the prime Apostle, that he wished to dwell still in Tabor; how shall we be ravished with the full view of that all-glorious Deity, whose very sight gives blessedness! What a life doth the presence of the sun put into all creatures here below! Yet the body of it is afar off; the power of it created and finite. Oh, then, how perfect and happy a life must we needs receive from the Maker of it, when the beams of his heavenly glory shall shine in our face! Here below, our weak senses are marred with too excellent objects: our pure spirits above cannot complain of excess; but, by how much more of that divine light they take in, are so much the more blessed.—LEIGHTON.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.—There is not so much need of learning as of grace, to apprehend those things which concern our everlasting peace. Neither is it our brain, that must be set on work here; but our heart; for true happiness doth not consist in a mere speculation, but a fruition of good. However therefore, there is excellent use of scholarship in all the sacred employments of divinity, yet in the main act, which imports salvation, skill must give place to affection. Happy is the soul, that is possessed of Christ, how poor soever in all inferior endowments.

Ye are wise, O ye great wits, while you spend yourselves in curious questions, and learned extravagancies.

744

Ye shall find one touch of Christ more worth to your souls than all your deep and laborious disquisitions: one drachm of faith more precious than a pound of knowledge. In vain shall ye seek for this in your books, if ye miss it in your bosoms. If you know all things, and cannot truly say, "I know whom I have believed," 2 Tim. i. 12, you have but knowledge enough to know yourselves truly miserable.

Wouldst thou, therefore, my son, find true and solid comfort in the hour of temptation, in the agony of death? make sure work for thy soul, in the days of thy peace. Find Christ thine, and, in the despite of hell, thou art both safe and blessed.

Look not so much to an absolute Deity, infinitely and incomprehensibly glorious; alas, that majesty, because perfectly and essentially good, is, out of Christ, no other than an enemy to thee! Thy sin hath offended his justice, which is himself; what hast thou to do with that dreadful power, which thou hast provoked?

Look to that merciful and all-sufficient "Mediator between God and man," who is both God and man, "Jesus Christ the righteous;" 1 Tim. ii. 5, 1 John ii. 1. It is his charge, and our duty. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me;" John xiv. 1.—HALL.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake.—See Commentary on Chap. X. 30, in § CCLIV.

HYMN.

Thou art the WAY ;—to Thee alone,
From sin and death we flee ;
And he who would the Father seek ;
Must seek him, Lord, in Thee.

Thou art the TRUTH ;—thy word alone
True wisdom can impart ;
Thou only canst instruct the mind,
And purify the heart.

Thou art the LIFE !—the rending tomb
Proclaims thy conq'ring arm ;
And those who put their trust in Thee,
Nor death, nor hell, shall harm.

Thou art the way, the truth, the life !
Grant us to know that way,
That truth to keep, that life to win,
Which lead to endless day.

§ CCLXIV.

CHAP. XIV. 15—31.

*Christ requesteth love and obedience :
promiseth the Holy Ghost the Comforter,
and leaveth his peace with his disciples.*

15 ¶ ' If ye love me, keep
my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Fa-
ther, and ' he shall give you
another Comforter, that he may
abide with you for ever ;

17 *Even* ' the Spirit of truth ;
' whom the world cannot re-
ceive, because it seeth him not,
neither knoweth him : but ye
know him ; for he dwelleth with
you, " and shall be in you.

18 " I will not leave you
' comfortless ; ' I will come to
you.

5 B

19 Yet a little while, and the
world seeth me no more ; but
' ye see me : " because I live,
ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know
that ' I *am* in my Father, and
ye in me, and I in you.

21 ' He that hath my com-
mandments, and keepeth them,
he it is that loveth me : and he
that loveth me shall be loved
of my Father, and I will love
him, and will manifest myself
to him.

22 ' Judas saith unto him,
not Iscariot, Lord, how is it
that thou wilt manifest thyself
unto us, and not unto the
world ?

23 Jesus answered and said
unto him, ' If a man love me,
he will keep my words : and
my Father will love him, ' and
we will come unto him, and
make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not
keepeth not my sayings : and
' the word which ye hear is not
mine, but the Father's which
sent me.

25 These things have I spoken
unto you, being *yet* present with
you.

26 But ' the Comforter, *which*
is the Holy Ghost, whom the
Father will send in my name,
' he shall teach you all things,
and bring all things to your

745

remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 ^a Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. ^b Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how ^c I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, ^d I go unto the Father : for ^e my Father is greater than I.

29 And ^f now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you : ^g for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father ; and ^h as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

^g ver. 21, 23. ch. xv. 10, 14. 1 John v. 8.—^r ch. xv. 26 ; & xvi. 7. Rom. viii. 15, 26.—^s ch. xv. 26 ; & xvi. 13. 1 John iv. 6.—^t 1 Cor. ii. 14.—^u 1 John ii. 27.—^v Mat. xxviii. 20.—^w Or, *orphans*.—^y ver. 3, 29.—^x ch. xvi. 16.—^a 1 Cor. xv. 20.—^b ver. 10. ch. x. 38 ; & xvii. 21, 23, 26.—^c ver. 15, 23. 1 John ii. 5 ; & v. iii. ^d Luke vi. 16.—^e ver. 15.—^f 1 John ii. 24. Rev. iii. 20.—^g ver. x. ch. v. 19, 38 ; & vii. 16 ; & viii. 28 ; & xii. 49.—^h ver. 16. Luke xii. 49. ch. xv. 28 ; & xvi. 7.—ⁱ ch. ii. 22 ; & xii. 16 ; & xvi. 13. 1 John ii. 20, 27.—^k Phil. iv. 7. Col. iii. 15.—^l ver. 1.—^m ver. 3, 15.—ⁿ ver. 12. ch. xvi. 16 ; & xx. 17.—^o See ch. v. 18 ; & x. 30. Phil. ii. 6.—^p ch. xiii. 19 ; & xvi. 4.—^q ch. xii. 31 ; & xvi. 11.—^r ch. x. 18. Phil. ii. 8. Heb. v. 8.

READER.—*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*—Love will not willingly do anything that may offend and grieve the object loved. Love

is an assimilating affection : it is the very cement that joins God and the soul together in the same spirit, and makes them to be of one heart and of one mind : it is the loadstone of the soul, that toucheth all other affections, and makes them stand heavenward. When once God hath wrought the love of himself in our hearts, this will constrain us to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates. Sin is the only thing that God hates ; and those that love him, will not, cannot, but hate sin : their love to God will constrain them to do it. Ps. xcvi. 10 : "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." And certainly, the hatred of evil is the best security against the committing of it ; will any one take a toad or a serpent into his bosom, to lodge it there ? Truly, as utterly impossible it is, while the exciting grace of God stirs up and quickens our love to him, that we should ever embrace a vile lust and lodge it in our hearts ; since our sight of the beauty of holiness hath made it ugly, and our love to God hath made it hateful.—HORKINS.

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of Truth.—The Spirit is a Comforter, because an advocate to his people ; for so much the word signifies, and is elsewhere rendered, 1 John ii. 1. Now He is called "Another Comforter," or Advocate, to denote the difference between Christ and the Spirit in this particular. Christ, by the office of his mediation and intercession, is an

ST. JOHN XIV. 15—31.

Advocate for his Church ; and doth, in his own person in heaven, apply his merits, and further the cause of our salvation with his Father. The Spirit doth not intercede nor appear before God in person for us, as Christ doth, but maketh intercession for men in and by themselves, giving them an access unto the Father, emboldening them in their fears, and helping them in their infirmities, when they know not what to pray.

The Spirit is a Comforter, by applying and representing Christ absent unto the soul again. For the Spirit carrieth a Christian's heart up to Christ in heavenly affections and conversation. As a piece of earth, when it is out of its place, doth ever move to the whole earth, so a spark of Christ's Spirit will naturally move upward unto him who hath the fulness in him. Likewise the Spirit bringeth Christ down to a Christian, formeth him in his heart, evidenceth him, and the virtue of his passion and resurrection, to the conscience, in the powerful dispensation of his holy ordinances.

The Spirit is a Comforter by a work of sweet and fruitful illumination, not only giving the knowledge but the love and comfort of the truth unto a Christian, making him with open face behold as in a glass the glory of God, and thereby transforming him into the same image from glory to glory. The light of other sciences is like the light of a candle, nothing but light ; but the knowledge of Christ by the Spirit is like the light of the Sun, which hath influences and

virtue in it. And this is that which the Apostle calls the "Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of God;" for, though there be no prophetic nor extraordinary revelations by dreams, visions, ecstasies, or enthusiasms ; yet, according to the measure of spiritual light and diligent observation of Holy Scriptures, there are still manifold revelations or manifestations of Christ unto the soul. The secret and intimate acquaintance of the soul with God ; the heavings, aspirings, and harmony of the heart with Christ ; the sweet illapses and flashes of heavenly light upon the soul ; the knowledge of the depths of God and of Satan, of the whole armour of God and the strong man, of conflicts of spirit, protection of angels, experiences of mercy, issues of temptation, and the like, are heavenly and constant revelations out of the word manifested to the souls of the faithful by the Spirit.

The Spirit is a Comforter in those effects of joy and peace which he worketh in the heart. For joy is ever the fruit and companion of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22 ; Acts xiii. 52 ; and the joy of the Spirit is like the intercession of the Spirit, "unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. Not like the joy of the world, which is empty, false, and deceitful, full of vanity, vexation, insufficiency, unsuitableness to the soul ; mingled with fears of disappointment and miscarriage, with tremblings and guilt of conscience, with certainty of period and expiration ; but clear, holy, constant, unmixed, satisfactory, and proportionable to the compass

of the soul, exciting more gladness than all the world can take in the increase of their corn and wine. Ps. iv. 7.—REYNOLDS.

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.—Oh, the happy condition of the man that is in Christ, and hath Christ in him! Shall I account him rich, that hath store of oxen, and sheep, and horses, and camels; that hath heaps of metals, and spots of ground? and shall I not account him infinitely more rich, that owns and enjoys Him, whose the earth is, and the fulness of it; whose heaven is, and the glory of it? Shall I justly account that man great, whom the king will honour, and place near to himself? and shall I not esteem that man more honourable, whom the King of Heaven is pleased to admit into such partnership of glory, as to profess, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. iii. 21.—HALL.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—

What is there in the world, that can fill the vast desires of my soul, but only he who is infinitely above me and my desires too? Will riches do it? No, I may as soon undertake to fill my barns with grace, as my heart with gold; and as easily stuff my bags with virtue, as ever satisfy my desires with wealth. Do I hunt after pleasures? These may, indeed, charm and delight my brutish senses, but can never be

agreeable or proportionate to my spiritual faculties. Do I grasp at honour and popularity? These, again, are as empty and unsatisfying as the former; they may make me look high and great in the eye of the world, turn my head giddy with applause, or puff up my heart with pride, but they can never fill up the measure of its desires. And thus, if I should have the whole world at command, and could, with Alexander, wield both sword and sceptre over all the nations and languages of it, would this content me? or rather, should I not sit down, and weep with him, that I had not another world to conquer and possess? Whereas, God being an infinite good, it is impossible for me to desire any thing which I may not enjoy in him and his mercies: let me, or any other creature, extend our desires never so far, still the graces and blessings of this infinite God will be infinitely beyond them all: insomuch that though ten thousand worlds are not able to satisfy one soul, yet God is able to satisfy ten thousand souls, yea, and ten millions more to them, as well as if there was only one soul in all the world to satisfy.—BEVERIDGE.

Is it then possible at once to be solidly and completely happy? You have not merely the ideas of it, but the thing itself, not only clearly pointed out, but most freely offered, with Divine munificence; so that if you do not obstinately reject the offer, it must be your own; and this happiness consists in returning to the favour and friendship of God, who most mercifully grants us the free pardon of all

our sins, if we do with unfeigned repentance, and a heart free of all guile, not only humbly confess and lament them, but entirely forsake, and with implacable hatred, for ever renounce them. All the names, all the variety of felicities, bliss, and happiness are accumulated on that man who has known this "change of the right hand of the Most High;" on whom this bright day of expiation and pardon has beamed, he easily looks down from on high on all the empty titles and false images of earthly happiness; and when he is bereaved of them all, yea, and beset on every side with what the world calls misfortunes and afflictions, ceases not to be happy. In sorrow he is joyful, in poverty rich, and in chains free; when he seems buried deep, so that not one ray of the sun can reach him, he is surrounded with radiant lustre; when overwhelmed with ignominy he glories; and in death itself he lives, he conquers, he triumphs. What can be heavy to that man, who is eased of the intolerable burden of sin? How animated was that saying of Luther, "Smite, Lord, smite; for thou hast absolved me from my sins." Whose anger should he fear who knows that God is propitious to him, that supreme "King, whose wrath is indeed the messenger of death, but the light of his countenance is life," who joys all by the rays of his favour, and by one smile disperses the darkest cloud, and calms the most turbulent tempest.

—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Eternal Spirit, we confess
And sing the wonders of thy grace;
Thy power conveys our blessings down
From God the Father and the Son.

Enlighten'd by thy heavenly ray,
Our shades and darkness turn to day;
Thine inward teaching makes us know
Our danger, and our refuge too.

Thy power and glory work within,
And break the chain of reigning sin;
All our imperious lusts subdue,
And form our wretched hearts anew.

The troubled conscience knows thy voice;
Thy cheering words awake our joys;
Thy words allay the stormy wind,
And calm the surges of the mind.

WATTS.

§ CCLXV.

CHAP. XV. 1—14.

The consolation and mutual love between Christ and his members, under the parable of the vine.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the

vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

a Mat. xv. 18.—b ch. xiii. 10; & xvii. 17. Eph. v. 32. 1 Pet. i. 22.—c Col. i. 23. 1 John ii. 6.—d Hos. xiv. & Phil. i. 11; & iv. 13.—e Or, covered from me. Act. v. 12.—f Mat. iii. 10; & vii. 19.—g ver. 16. ch. xiv. 12, 14; & xvi. 23.—h Mat. v. 16. Phil. i. 11.—i ch. vii. 31; & xiii. 25.—j ch. xiv. 15, 21, 23.—k ch. xvi. 24; & xvii. 13. 1 John i. 4.—l ch. xiii. 34. 1 Thea. iv. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 8. 1 John iii. 11; & iv. 21.—m ch. x. 11, 15. Num. v. 7, 8. Eph. v. 2. 1 John iii. 16.—n ch. xiv. 14, 23. See Mat. xii. 50.

READER.—*I am the vine, ye are the branches.*—Look but into thy garden, or orchard; and see the vine, or any other fruit-bearing tree, how it grows and fructifies. The branches are laden with increase: whence is this, but that they are one with the stock; and the stock one with the root? Were either of these severed, the plant were barren and dead. The branch hath not sap enough to maintain life in itself, unless it receive it from the body of the tree; nor that, unless it derived it from the root; nor that, unless it were cherished by the earth. Were the branch and body of the tree of different substances, and only closed together in some artificial contiguity, no fruit could be expected from it; it is only the abiding in the tree as a living limb of that plant, which yields it the benefit and issue of vegetation. No otherwise is it between Christ and his Church: the bough and the tree are not more of one piece, than we are of one substance with our Saviour; and, branching out from him, and receiving the sap of heavenly virtue from his precious root, we cannot but be acceptably fruitful.—HALL.

The branches of the wild olive are cut off, and are grafted with choice

ST. JOHN XV. 1—14.

scions of the good olive. Those grafts grow ; and are now, by this incision, no less embodied in that stock, than if they had sprouted out by a natural propagation ; neither can be any more separated from it, than the strongest bough that nature puts forth. In the mean time, that scion alters the nature of that stock ; and, while the root gives fatness to the stock ; and the stock yields juice to the scion, the scion gives goodness to the plant, and a specification to the fruit : so as, while the graft is now the same thing with the stock, the tree is different from what it was. So is it between Christ and the believing soul. Old Adam is our wild stock, what could that have yielded, but either none, or sour fruit ? We are grafted into the new man, Christ, that is now incorporated into us. We are become one with him. Our nature is not more ours, than he is ours by grace. Now we bear his fruit, and not our own : our old stock is forgotten, all things are become new. Our natural life we receive from Adam ; our spiritual life and growth from Christ.—HALL.

Without me ye can do nothing.—How true is that word of our Saviour, who is truth itself, “ Without me ye can do nothing,” severed from me, as a branch that is not in me. They that are altogether out of Christ, in spiritual exercises do nothing at all. It is true, they may pray and hear the word, yea, and preach it too, and yet in so doing they do nothing in effect. They have the matter of good actions, but it is the internal form that gives being to

things. They are but a number of empty words, and a dead service to a living God. For all our outward performances and worship of the body is nothing but the body of worship, and therefore nothing but a carcase, except the Lord Jesus, by his Spirit, breathe upon it the breath of life. Yea, the worshipper himself is spiritually dead, till he receive life from Jesus, and be quickened by his Spirit.—LEIGHTON.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.—God doth not require less from us, but only hath promised more to us, in the new, than he did in the old, covenant. There, we were to perform obedience to God ; but it was by our own strength : here we are to perform the same obedience still ; but it is by his strength. Nay, as we have more obligations to obedience upon us now, than we had before, by reason of God’s expressing more grace and favour to us than formerly he did ; so I believe God expects more from us, under the new, than he did under the old, covenant. In that, he expected the obedience of men ; in this, he expects the obedience of Christians, such as are by faith united unto Christ, and, in Christ, unto himself ; and so are to do what they do, not by the strength of man, as before, but by the strength of the eternal God himself ; who, as he at first created me for himself, so he hath now purchased me to himself, received me into covenant with him, and promised to enable me with grace to perform that obedience he requires

ST. JOHN XV. 1—14.

from me; and therefore, he now expects I should lay out myself, even whatsoever I have or am, wholly for him and his glory.—BEVERIDGE.

Men hear that there is a God who is infinitely holy, but they can see neither him nor his holiness; yet when they see some lineaments of it in the face of his children, which are in no others, this may convince them that its perfection, which must be somewhere, can be nowhere else than in their heavenly Father. When these, which are his peculiar plants, bring forth the fruits of holiness, which naturally they yielded not, it testifies a supernatural work of his hand who planted them, and the more they are fruitful the greater is his praise. "Herein," says our Saviour, "is your heavenly Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit." Were it not for the conscience of this duty to God, and possibly the necessity of their station and calling, it may be, some Christian had rather altogether lock up and keep within himself any grace he hath, than let it appear at all, considering some hazards which he and it run in the discovery; and it may be, could take some pleasure in the world's mistakes and disesteem of him. But seeing both piety and charity require the acting of graces in converse with men, that which hypocrisy doth *for itself*, a real Christian may and should do *for God*.—LEIGHTON.

That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full.—Christ is the fountain, not only of some, but of all the true joy and

comfort that his people have, or ever can have, in the world. It all proceeds from him, whom having not seen they love, in whom, though now they see him not, "yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." 1 Pet. i. 8. For upon their believing in him, as having been delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification, he manifested himself and his special love and favour to them, in the pardon of their sins, and their reconciliation to Almighty God, whereby their souls are filled, not only with unspeakable but glorious joy, of the same nature as that which the saints in heaven are continually transported with. This is that which is called the lifting up the light of God's countenance; and his causing his face to shine upon them. Ps. iv. 6. When the Sun of righteousness thus shineth upon them, refreshing and comforting their hearts, by the sweet influences of that Holy Spirit that proceedeth from him.—BEVERIDGE.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.—Yes, this is the livery, which our Lord and Saviour made choice of, whereby his menial servants should be known and distinguished. "By this shall all men know that ye be my disciples if ye have love to one another;" John xiii. 35. In vain shall any man pretend to a discipleship, if he do not make it good by his love to all the family of Christ.

The whole Church is the spiritual temple of God. Every believer is a living stone, laid in those sacred

ST. JOHN XV. 15—27.

walls; what is our Christian love, but the mortar or cement, whereby these stones are fast joined together to make up this heavenly building? without which, that precious fabric could not hold long together; but would be subject to disjoining, by those violent tempests of opposition, wherewith it is commonly beaten upon. There is no place for any loose stone in God's edifice: the whole Church is one entire body: all the limbs must be held together by the ligaments of Christian love: if any one will be severed, and affect to subsist of itself, it hath lost his place in the body. See Eph. iv. 15, 16.—HALL.

HYMN.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Who are the friends of Jesus here,
And make their love to him appear?
They who with cheerful hearts and hands,
Will do whate'er the Lord commands.

The Lord's commands are just and good,
And sweet to souls by grace renew'd;
'Tis their obedience to his laws
That shows them friendly to his cause.

Helpless themselves, their gracious Lord
Will every needful aid afford;
And when in Jesus' strength they go,
All duties they with ease can do.

HURN.

§ CCLXVI.

CHAP. XV. 15—27.

A comfort in the hatred and persecution of the world. The office of the Holy Ghost and of the Apostles.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant know-

5 c

eth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 ^oYe have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ^oordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that ^o whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 ^oThese things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 ^oIf the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you.

19 ^oIf ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but ^o because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, ^oThe servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: ^o if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But ^o all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 ^oIf I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not

753

had sin: 'but now they have no ' cloke for their sin.

23 ^d He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.

26 ^a But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ^a he shall testify of me:

27 And 'ye also shall bear witness, because ^a ye have been with me from the beginning.

o See Gen. xviii. 17. ch. xvii. 26. Acts xx. 27.—p ch. vi. 70; & xiii. 18. 1 John iv. 10, 19.—q Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15. Col. i. 6.—r ver. 7. ch. xiv. 13.—s ver. 12.—t 1 John iii. 1, 18.—u 1 John iv. 5.—v ch. xvii. 14.—y Mat. x. 24. Luke vi. 40. ch. xiii. 16.—z Ezek. iii. 7.—a Mat. x. 22; & xxiv. 9. ch. xvi. 2.—b ch. ix. 41.—c Rom. i. 20. Jam. iv. 17.—d Or, excuse.—e 1 John ii. 23.—f ch. iii. 2; vii. 31; & ix. 32.—g Ps. xxxv. 19; & lxxix. 4.—h Luke xxiv. 49. ch. xiv. 17, 26; & xvi. 7, 13. Acts ii. 88.—i 1 John v. 6.—j Luke xxiv. 48. Acts i. 8, 21, 22; & ii. 32; & iii. 15; & iv. 20, 33; & v. 32; & x. 29; & xiii. 31. 1 Pet. v. 1. 2 Pet. i. 16.—k Luke i. 2. 1 John i. 1, 2.

READER.—*These things I command you, that ye love one another.*—Christian brethren are united by a three-fold cord; two of them are common to other men, but the third is the strongest, and theirs peculiarly. Their bodies are descended of the same man, and their souls of the same God; but their new life, by

which they are most entirely brethren, is derived from the same God—Man, Jesus Christ; yea, in him they are all one body, receiving life from him their glorious Head, who is called "the firstborn among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29. And as his unspeakable love was the source of this new being and fraternity, so, doubtless, it cannot but produce indissoluble love amongst them that are partakers of it. The spirit of love and concord is that precious ointment which runs down from the head of our great High Priest, to the skirts of his garment. The life of Christ and this law of love are combined, and cannot be severed. Can there be enmity between those hearts that meet in him? Why do you pretend yourselves Christians, and yet remain not only strangers to this love, but most contrary to it, "biters and devourers" one of another, and will not be convinced of the great guiltiness and uncomeliness of strifes and envyings amongst you? Is this the badge that Christ hath left his brethren, to wrangle and malign one another? Do you not know, on the contrary, that they are to be known by mutual love? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," John xiii. 3, 5. How often doth that beloved disciple press this! He drank deep of that well-spring of love which was in the breast on which he leaned, and, if they relate aright, he died exhorting this, "Love one another." Oh! that there were more of this love of Christ in our hearts, arising from the *sense*

of his love to us ! That would teach this mutual love more effectually, which the preaching of it may set before us, but, without that other teaching, cannot work within us. Why do we still hear these things in vain ? Do we believe what the love of Christ did to us and suffered for us ? And shall we do nothing for him,—not forgive a shadow, a fancy of injury, much less a real one, for his sake, and love him that wronged us, whoever he be, but especially being one of our brethren in this spiritual sense ?

Many are the duties of this peculiar fraternal love ; that mutual converse, and admonition, and reproof, and comforting, and other duties which are fallen into neglect, not only amongst formal, but even amongst real, Christians. Let us entreat more of his Spirit who is love, and that will remedy this evil.—LEIGHTON.

The whole sum of the law is love, love to God and love to man, these two contain all, and the former of the two contains the latter ; love to God is the only true principle and spring of all due love to man, and all love that begins there, returns thither likewise and ends there.

The engaging the whole mind and soul to the love of God, does not engross it so, that there should be no kind of love communicable to man ; on the contrary, it is to refine it, that it may flow forth the purer and better. All love should be once called in to God, to be sublimated and purified there, and then set in its right channel and motion, so as man be loved in him and for him ; not to impair our love to him, but indeed to extend and

act it as he allows : and so to love man is to love God, that love taking its rise from him, and terminating in him ; and in this circle is the proper notion of celestial Divine love.

The duty then here meant and commanded, is this, “ that we love one another,” and our love must be then qualified, it must be without hypocrisy, and sincere ; such as though it may consist with, yet doth not wholly consist in, civilities of expression and behaviour, but a real benevolence of soul, and good will to all, a love-disposing readily to forgive evil, and do good upon all occasions.

Yet this is not such a tenderness of complacency, as to partake with any in any evil ways ; oh ! no, “ abhorring that which is evil,” flying from it with indignation, with a kind of antipathy. And thus it will be from the new nature in a Christian, the Holy Spirit of Christ, which cannot endure the unholiness or impurity of the world, but is chafed away, as doves with noisome smells, or bees with smoke.—LEIGHTON.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.—If we be Christ’s disciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the world, than Christ himself did, neither indeed can we fare so bad ; for it is impossible that we should undergo so much for him as he hath undergone for us, ours being only the sufferings of men, his the sufferings of one who was God as well as man ; whereby sufferings in general are sanctified to our human nature, it having already undergone them in the person of the Son of God. So

that it can be now no disparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea, death itself, or any other calamity whatsoever in this world, seeing the Son of God himself, he that made the world, underwent the same while himself was in it.--BEVERIDGE.

"The Captain," or Leader "of our salvation," as the Apostle speaks, was "consecrated by suffering," Heb. ii. 10; that was the way by which "he entered into the holy place," where he is "now our everlasting High Priest, making intercession for us." If he be our Leader to salvation, must not we follow him in the way he leads, whatsoever it is? If it be, as we see it is, by the way of sufferings, we must either follow on in that way, or fall short of that salvation; for there is no other leader, nor any other way than that which he opened: so that there is not only a congruity in it, that his followers be conformed to him in suffering, but a necessity, if they will follow him on till they attain to glory. And the consideration of both these, cannot but argue a Christian into a resolution for this royal way of suffering, through which their King and Lord himself went to his glory. It could hardly be believed that this was his way, and we can hardly believe that it must be ours. "O fools and slow of heart to believe! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory." Luke xxiv. 25, 26.

Would you be at glory, and will you not follow your Leader in the only way to it? Must there be

another way cut out for you by yourself? O absurd! "Shall the servant be greater than his Master?" John xiii. 16. Are not you fairly dealt with? If you have a mind to Christ, you shall have full as much of the world's good-will as he had: "if it hate you" he bids you remember "how it hated him."—LEIGHTON.

He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.—It is true, O sinner, my sins can never invade God's essence: that is infinitely above the attempts of men or devils. But, yet, every wicked wretch would, if he could, dethrone God. Sinners would not have him be so holy, nor so just, as he is; not so holy in hating of their sins, nor so just in punishing of them: that is, they would not have him to be God; for it is necessary that God should be as he is. Sinners do really contradict God's purity, rebel against his sovereignty, violate his commands, defy his justice, provoke his mercy, despise his threatenings, and hinder the manifestations of his glory to the world. And is all this nothing? Every sinner hath so much poison and venom in him, that he would even spit it in the face of God himself, if he could reach him; but because God is in himself secure from their impotent assaults, sin shews its spite against him in what it can; defaceth his image wherever it comes; abolisheth all structures and lineaments of God in the soul; and would banish his name, his fear, his worship, from off the face of the whole earth. And, therefore, thou,

ST. JOHN XVI. 1—15.

who art guilty of this rebellion against the great Majesty of Heaven, canst thou yet think thy sins to be slight and inconsiderable; and not worth, either the cognizance or the vengeance of the Almighty?

—HOPKINS.

HYMN.

On Thee, O God of purity,
I wait for hallowing grace:
None without holiness shall see
The glories of thy face.

In souls unholy and unclean
Thou never canst delight,
Nor shall they, if enslav'd by sin,
Appear before thy sight.

Lead me in all thy righteous ways,
Nor suffer me to slide;
Point out thy path before my face,
My God, be thou my guide.

Oh may I ne'er to evil yield,
Defended from above;
And kept and cover'd with the shield
Of thine Almighty love.

WATTS.

§ CCLXVII.

CHAP. XVI. 1—15.

Christ comforteth his disciples against tribulation by the promise of the Holy Ghost.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And these things will they

do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the

Spirit of truth, is come, 'he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you:

15 'All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew *it* unto you.

o Mat. xi. 6; & xxiv. 10; & xxvi. 31.—d ch. ix. 22, 34; & xii. 42.—e Acts viii. 1; & ix. 1; & xxvi. 9, 10, 11.—f ch. xv. 21. Rom. x. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 13.—g ch. xiii. 19; & xiv. 29.—h See Mat. ix. 15.—i ver. 10, 16, ch. vii. 33; & xiii. 8; & xiv. 23.—k ver. 22. ch. xiv. 1.—l ch. vii. 33; & xiv. 16, 26; & xv. 23.—m Acts ii. 33. Eph. iv. 8. n Or, evidence.—o Acts ii. 22—27.—p Luke x. 18. ch. xii. 31. Eph. ii. 2. Col. ii. 15. Heb. ii. 14.—q Mark iv. 33. 1 Cor. iii. 2. Heb. v. 12.—r ch. xiv. 17; & xv. 26.—s ch. xiv. 23. 1 John ii. 20, 27. t Mat. xi. 27. ch. iii. 35; & xiii. 8; & xvii. 10.

Reader.—"He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me;" that is, he shall convince the world that I was a true prophet sent from God, and no impostor; and consequently, that they were guilty of a great contempt of God, and a horrible murder, in putting me to death.

"He shall convince the world of righteousness," that is, of the innocency of that holy and just person, whom they had condemned as a malefactor. "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father;" that is, this shall be an evidence to the world of my innocency of those crimes with which I was charged.

"He shall convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this

world is judged." He that usurped the authority of God in the world, and by his instruments had procured Christ to be condemned as a counterfeit king, is himself dethroned and condemned: "the prince of this world is judged." He that thought to have destroyed the Son of God by putting him to death, is by that means destroyed himself. So the Apostle tells us, that "Christ, through his death," that is, upon occasion of his death, and his resurrection from the dead consequent upon it, "hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."—TILLOTSON.

READER.—Respecting the office and work of the Comforter in the hearts of believers, see Commentary on Chap. XIV. 16. §. CCLXIV.

§ CCLXVIII.

CHAP. XVI. 16—33.

Christ comforteth his disciples against tribulation by his resurrection and ascension; assureth their prayers made in his name to be acceptable to his Father. Peace in Christ, and in the world affliction.

16 "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me," because I go to the Father.

17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A

little while, and ye shall no see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me : and, Because I go to the Father ?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while ? we cannot tell what he saith.

19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me ?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 ^a A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 ^a And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and ^a your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. ^a Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my

name, he will give *it* you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, ^a that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in ^a proverbs : but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in ^a proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

26 ^a At that day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you :

27 ^a For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and ^a have believed that I came out from God.

28 ^a I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no ^a proverb.

30 Now are we sure that ^a thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee : by this ^a we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe ?

32 ^a Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, ^a every man to ^a his

own, and shall leave me alone : and ' yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that " in me ye might have peace. " In the world ye shall have tribulation : ° but be of good cheer ; ' I have overcome the world.

u ver. 10, ch. vii. 33; & xiii. 33; & xiv. 19.—w ver. 28. ch. xiii. 3.—x Is. xxvi. 17.—y ver. 6.—z Luke xxiv. 41, 52. ch. xiv. 1, 27; & xx. 20. Acts ii. 46; & xiii. 52. 1 Pet. i. 8.—a Mat. vii. 7. ch. xiv. 13; & xv. 16.—b ch. xv. 11.—| Or, parables.—| Or, parables.—c ver. 23.—d ch. xiv. 21, 23.—e ver. 30. ch. iii. 3; & xvii. 8.—f ch. xiii. 3.—| Or, parable.—g ch. xxi. 17.—h ver. 27. ch. xvii. 8.—| Mat. xxvi. 31. Mark xiv. 27.—k ch. xx. 10.—| Or, his own home.—l ch. viii. 29; & xiv. 10, 11.—m Is. lx. 6. ch. xiv. 27. Rom. v. 1. Eph. ii. 14. Col. i. 20.—n ch. xv. 19, 20, 21, 2 Rom. iii. 12.—o ch. xv. 1.—p Rom. viii. 37. 1 John iv. 4; & v. 4.

READER.—*Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*—Lo here is a point transcending all the affectation of heathenism. Perhaps, some resolute spirit, whether out of a natural fortitude, or out of an ambition of fame or earthly glory, may set a face upon a patient enduring of loss or pain; but never any of those heroic Gentiles durst pretend to a joy in suffering. Thither can Christian courage reach; knowing, that "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Is he bereaved of his goods and worldly estate? he comforts himself in the conscience of a better treasure, that can never be lost. Is he afflicted with sickness? his comfort is, that the inward man is so much more renewed daily, as the outward perisheth. Is he slandered and unjustly disgraced? his comfort is, that there is a blessing which will more than make him amends. Is he banished? he knows he is on his

way homewards. Is he imprisoned? his spirit cannot be locked in: God and his angels cannot be locked out. Is he dying? to him "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Is he dead? he "rests from his labours," and is crowned with glory. Shortly, he is perfect gold, that comes more pure out of the fire than it went in; neither had he ever been so great a saint in heaven, if he had not passed through the flames of his trial here upon earth.—HALL.

Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.—If afraid of fainting, yea, if at the point of fainting, this revives the soul, draws in no less than the strength of God to support it: and what then can surcharge it? Thy access to God all the enemies in the world cannot hinder, the closest prison shuts not him out, yea, rather it shuts out other things and companies, that thou mayest have the more leisure for him, and the sweeter converse with him. Oh, acquaint yourselves with this exercise of prayer, and by it with God, that if days of trouble come, you may know whither to go and what way; and if you know this way, whatever befalls you, you are not much to be bemoaned.—LEIGHTON.

The Christian is so perpetually resident in heaven, that he is, often in every day, before the throne of grace; and he never comes there, without supplication in his hand: wherein also he loves to be importunate: and he speeds accordingly; for he never departs empty; while other cold suitors, that come thither

but in some good fits of devotion, obtain nothing but denials.

He dares not press to God's footstool in his own name: he is conscious enough of his own unworthiness; but he comes in the gracious and powerful name of his righteous Mediator, in whom he knows he cannot but be accepted; and, in an humble boldness, for his own sake craves mercy.

No man is either more awful or more confident. When he hath put up his petition to the King of heaven, he presumes not to stint the time or manner of God's condescent; but patiently and faithfully waits for the good hour, and leaves himself upon that infinite wisdom and goodness.

He doth not affect length so much, as fervour: neither so much minds his tongue, as his heart.

His prayers are suited according to the degrees of the benefits sued for. He, therefore, begs grace absolutely, and temporal blessings with limitation; and is accordingly affected with the grant.

Neither is he more earnest in craving mercies, than he is zealously desirous to be retributory to God when he hath received them; not more heartily seeking to be rich in grace, than to improve his graces to the honour and advantage of the bestower.

With an awful and broken heart, doth he make his addresses to that Infinite Majesty, from whose presence he returns with comfort and joy.

His soul is constantly fixed there, whither he pours it out. Distraction

and distrust are shut out from his closet, and he is so taken up with his devotion, as one that makes it his work to pray. And, when he hath offered up his sacrifices unto God, his faith listens, and looks in at the door of heaven to know how they are taken.—HALL.

In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.—Were the matter referred to our modelling, we would assign the church constant peace and prosperity for her portion, and not consent that the least air of trouble should come near her. We would have no enemies to molest her, nor stir against her, or if they did stir, we would have them to be presently repressed; and these, in our judgment, would be the fairest and most glorious tokens of his love and power whose spouse she is. But this carnal wisdom is enmity against God, and to the glory of God, which rises so often out of the wrath of his enemies. Had God caused Pharaoh to yield at the very first to the release of his people, where had been the fame of those miraculous judgments in Egypt and mercies on the Israelites, the one setting out and illustrating the other? God is more careful of his own glory than we can be, and the greater height man's wrath arises to, the more honour shall arise to him out of it. Did not his omnipotency shine brighter in the flames of that furnace into which the children were cast, than if the king's wrath had been at first cooled? Certainly, the more both it and the furnace had their heat augmented, the more was God glorified. Whether its course be longer or shorter,

ST. JOHN XVII. 1—19.

man's wrath ends always in God's praise.—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Eternal Spirit, by whose power
Are burst the bonds of death,
Be this for us a favour'd hour,
Oh give us living faith!

'Tis thine to cheer us when distress'd,
To raise us when we fall,
To calm the doubting troubled breast,
And aid when sinners call.

'Tis thine to bring God's sacred word,
And write it on our heart;
Then its reviving truths record,
And then its peace impart.

Almighty Spirit, visit thus
Our hearts, and guide our ways;
Pour down thy quick'ning grace on us,
And tune our lips to praise.

BATHURST.

§ CCLXIX.

CHAP. XVII. 1—19.

Christ prayeth to his Father to glorify him; and to preserve his Apostles in unity and truth.

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, " the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 ' As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many ' as thou hast given him.

3 And " this is life eternal, that they might know thee ' the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

762

4 ' I have glorified thee on the earth: " I have finished the work ' which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the ' glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 ' I have manifested thy name unto the men " which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words " which thou gavest me; and they have received them, ' and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: ' I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and ' thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 ' And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, ' keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, ' that they may be one " as we are.

12 While I was with them in the world, ^r I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and ^r none of them is lost, ^r but the son of perdition; ^a that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 ^b I have given them thy word; ^c and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, ^d even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but ^e that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

16 ^f They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 ^g Sanctify them through thy truth: ^h thy word is truth.

18 ⁱ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And ^j for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be ^k sanctified through the truth.

^a ch. xii. 23; & xiii. 32.—^b Dan. vii. 14. Mat. xi. 27; & xxviii. 18. ch. iii. 35; & v. 27. 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27. Phil. ii. 10. Heb. ii. 8.—^c ver. 6, 9, 24. ch. vi. 37.—^d 1a. iii. 11. Jer. ix. 24.—^e 1 Cor. viii. 4. 1 Thes. i. 9.—^f ch. iii. 34; & v. 36, 37; & vi. 29, 57; & vii. 29; & x. 36; & xi. 42.—^g ch. xiii. 31; & xiv. 13.—^h ch. iv. 34; & v. 36; & ix. 3; & xix. 30.—ⁱ ch. xiv. 31; & xv. 10.—^j ch. i. 1, 2; & x. 30; & xiv. 9. Phil. ii. 6. Col. i. 15, 17. Heb. i. 5, 10.—^k ver. 26. Ps. xxii. 22.—^l ver. 2, 9, 11. ch. vi. 57, 59; & x. 29; & xv. 19.—^m ch. viii. 28; & xii. 49; & xiv. 10.—ⁿ ver. 25. ch. xvi. 27, 30.—^o 1 John v. 19.—^p ch. xvi. 15.—^q ch. xiii. 1; & xvi. 28.—^r 1 Pet. i. 5. Jude i.—^s ver. 21, & c.—^t ch. x. 30.—^u ch. vi. 39; & x. 28. Heb. ii. 13.

—^y ch. xviii. 9. 1 John ii. 19.—^z ch. vi. 70; & xiii. 18.—^{aa} Ps. cii. 8. Acts i. 20.—^{ab} ver. 8.—^{ac} ch. xv. 18, 19. 1 John iii. 13.—^{ad} ch. viii. 23; ver. 16.—^{ae} Mat. vi. 13. Gal. i. 4. 2 Thes. iii. 3.—^{af} 1 John v. 14.—^{ag} ver. 14.—^{ah} ch. xv. 3. Acts xv. 9. Eph. v. 26. 1 Pet. i. 22.—^{ai} 2 Sam. vii. 23. Ps. cxix. 142, 151. ch. viii. 40.—^{aj} ch. xx. 21.—^{ak} 1 Cor. i. 2, 50. 1 Thes. iv. 7. Heb. x. 10.—^{al} Or, *truly sanctified*.

READER.—*Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*—The transcendent and supreme end of all, is the glory of God; all things returning in a most beautiful circle to this, as the original source from which they at first took their rise. The end of true religion, as far as it regards us, which is immediately connected with the former, and serves in a most glorious manner to promote it, is the salvation and happiness of mankind.—LEIGHTON.

This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.—God calls us from carnal and temporal things, to mind heaven and eternal glory. He sees and observes how eager we are in prosecuting of the world's vanities, and therefore calls upon us to leave doting upon such transitory and unsatisfying trifles, and to mind the things that belong to our everlasting peace; not to be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we "may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," Rom. xii. 2. To "set our affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon the earth," Col. iii. 2. To "seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness," Mat. vi. 33, in the first place. Hence it is styled "an heavenly calling," Heb. iii. 1; and an "high calling," Phil. iii. 14, because we are called by it to look

after high and heavenly things. He that made us hath so much kindness for us, that it pities him to see us moil and toil, and spend our strength and labour about such low and pitiful, such impertinent and unnecessary, things, which himself knows can never satisfy us, and therefore he calls and invites us to himself, and to the enjoyment of his own perfections, which are able to fill and satiate our immortal souls.—
BEVERIDGE.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.—Christ is glorious, in the very same degree with his Eternal Father; co-equal and co-essential with him; arrayed with light and majesty; arrayed with light and majesty; controlling all the powers of heaven: who, with an awful reverence, bow at his dread commands, and, with a winged speed, fulfil his pleasure. Yea, the Apostle hath almost racked and tortured language for an expression of it: Heb. i. 3. He is “the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person.” Why! what is glory, but the lustre of excellence? Brightness itself is but the streaming forth of glory. So that, to be the brightness of his Father’s glory, is to be the glory of his glory. It was a high and excellent conception of that philosopher who said, That light was but the shadow of God: if then, God’s shadow be so pure and radiant, how infinitely illustrious is his brightness; and the brightness of that which is most illustrious in God, his glory? And yet, this bright and glorious God was

pleased to eclipse his light, lay aside his rays, and immure himself in a house of clay. He, who was “in the form of God,” took upon him “the form of a servant.” He, who “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” thought it no shame to be made inferior to the angels, by becoming man; yea, and inferior to man, by becoming a curse for them.

And, certainly, if our love be commended and heightened by the great advantages we quit for the sake of others, how infinitely inexpressible must the love of Christ towards us be! who, being the ever-blessed God, by whose power all things were created and do subsist, dwelling in unapproachable light and glory, attended with legions of angels—that he should be pleased to forsake his palace, discard his retinue, shrink up himself into a poor helpless infant, shroud and veil all his Godhead, but only what sometimes displayed itself in the miracles which he wrought, and scarce more in these than in his patient suffering—what could persuade him to so great an abasement, but only the greatness of his love? for love is of an assimilating and transforming nature: and therefore, saith the Apostle, Heb. ii. 14; “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that, through death, he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”—HOPKINS.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.—The word sancti-

ST. JOHN XVII. 1—19.

ties both by particular exhortation to the study and exercise of those graces, sometimes pressing one, and sometimes another, and by right representing to them their objects. The word feeds faith, by setting before it the free grace of God, his rich promises, and his power and truth to perform them all, shews it the strength of the new covenant, not depending upon itself, but holding in Christ, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen; and drawing faith still to rest more entirely upon his righteousness. It feeds repentance, by making the vileness and deformity of sin daily more clear and visible. Still as more of the word hath admission into the soul, the more it hates sin, sin being the more discovered and the better known in its own native colour: as the more light there is in a house, the more anything in it that is uncleanly or deformed is seen or disliked. Likewise it increaseth love to God, by opening up still more and more of his infinite excellency and loveliness. As it borrows the resemblance of the vilest things in nature to express the foulness and hatefulnes of sin, so all the beauties and dignities that are in all the creatures are called together in the word, to give us some small scantling of that Uncreated Beauty which alone deserves to be loved. Thus might its fitness be instanced in respect to all other graces.

But above all other considerations, this is observable in the word as the increaser of grace, that it holds forth Jesus Christ to our view to look upon, not only as the perfect pattern, but as

the full fountain of all grace, from "whose fulness we all receive." The contemplating of him as the perfect image of God, and then drawing from him as having in himself a treasure for us, these give the soul more of that image in which consists truly spiritual growth. This the Apostle expresseth excellently, 2 Cor. iii. 18, speaking of the ministry of the Gospel revealing Christ, that "beholding in him," as it is, ch. iv. ver. 6, "in his face," "the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord:" not only that we may take the copy of his graces, but have a share of them.—LEIGHTON.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.—That which Papists fabulously say of some of their saints, that they received the impression of the wounds of Christ in their body, is true, in a spiritual sense, of the soul of every one that is indeed a saint and a believer: it takes the very print of his death by beholding him, and "dies to sin;" and then takes that of his rising again, and "lives to righteousness." As it applies it to "justify," so to "mortify," drawing virtue from it. Thus said one, "Christ aimed at this in all those sufferings which, with so much love, he went through; and shall I disappoint him, and not serve his end?"—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Saviour, hail! enthroned in glory,
There for ever to abide;
All the heavenly hosts adore thee,
Seated at thy Father's side."

There for sinners thou art pleading;
There thou dost our place prepare;
Ever for us interceding,
Till in glory we appear.

Worship, honour, power, and blessing,
Thou art worthy to receive;
Loudest praises, without ceasing,
Meet it is for us to give:
Help, ye bright angelic spirits;
Bring your sweetest, noblest lays;
Help to sing our Saviour's merits,
Help to chaunt Immanuel's praise.

§ CCLXX.

CHAP. XVII. 20—26.

Christ prayeth to his Father to glorify his Apostles, and all other believers, with him in heaven.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 'That they all may be one; as ^m thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; ⁿ that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, ^o that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 ' Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: ' for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, ^r the world hath not known thee: but ' I have known thee, and ' these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 ^s And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love ^t where-with thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

^l ver. 11, 22, 23. ch. x. 16. Rom. xii. 5. Gal. iii. 28. m ch. x. 38; & xiv. 11.—ⁿ ch. xiv. 20. 1 John i. 1; & iii. 24.—^o Col. iii. 14.—^p ch. xii. 26; & xiv. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 17.—^q ver. 5.—^r ch. xv. 21; & xvi. 3.—^s ch. vii. 29; & viii. 56; & x. 15.—^t ver. 8. ch. xvi. 27.—^u ver. 6 ch. xv. 15.—^v ch. xv. 9.

READER.—*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*—In all the main principles of religion, there is an universal and unanimous consent of all Christians, and these are they that constitute a Church. Those that agree in these, Christ is pleased to admit, for matter of doctrine, as members of that body, whereof he is the head: and if they admit not of each other as such, the fault is in the uncharitableness of the refusers, no less than in the error of the refused. And if any vain and loose stragglers will needs sever themselves, and wilfully choose to go ways of their own, let

them know, that the union of Christ's Church shall consist entire without them; this great ocean will be one collection of waters, when these drops are lost in the dust. In the mean time, it highly concerns all that wish well to the sacred name of Christ, to labour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. iv. 3.—HALL.

In case there happen to be differences of opinion, concerning points not essential, not necessary to salvation; this diversity may not breed an alienation of affection. That charity, which can cover a multitude of sins, may much more cover many small dissensions of judgment. We cannot hope to be all, and at all times, equally enlightened. At how many and great weaknesses of judgment did it please our merciful Saviour to connive in his domestic disciples! they, that had so long sat at the sacred feet of him that spake as never man spake, were yet to seek of those Scriptures, which had so clearly foretold his resurrection, John xx. 9; and, after that, were at a fault for the manner of his kingdom, Acts i. 6; yet he that breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax, falls not harshly upon them for so foul an error and ignorance, but entertains them with all loving respect, not as followers only, but as friends, John xv. 15. And his great Apostle, after he had spent himself in his unwearied endeavours upon God's Church, and had sown the seeds of wholesome and saving doctrine everywhere, what rank noisome weeds of erroneous opinions rose up

under his hand in the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, and Thessalonica! these he labours to root out with much zeal, with no bitterness, so opposing the errors, as not alienating his affection from the churches. These, these must be our precedents; pursuing that charge of the prime Apostle; "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." 1 Pet. iii. 8.—HALL.

This resemblance is often used in Scripture, and holds excellently well, but is little learned. Our temper and carriage correspond not to it. Who is there almost that finds it, the Spirit of Christ in them, knitting them to him as the common head, and one to another, as one in him, each busy to advance him, and to seek his glory, and to promote the good of one another? but alas! rather each for self, accursed self, as of an independent divided substance; yea, worse, hating and tearing one another; a monstrous sight, as if one limb of the same body should be pulling another to pieces. It signifies little to tell men what mutual tenderness is in nature; for a thorn in the foot the back bows, the head stoops, the eyes look, the hands feel, and seek it and pull it out. Christians are still so rigid, so unchristian to each other, they drive one another with the thorn sticking in, forcing their brethren to ways against the persuasions of their consciences.—LEIGHTON.

And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.—How little do those men know, who are ambitious of

glory, what it really is, and how to be attained? Nay, they eagerly catch at the empty shadow of it, while they avoid and turn their backs upon that glory which is real, substantial, and everlasting. The happiness of good men, in the life to come, is not only infinitely above all our expressions, but even beyond our most enlarged thoughts. By comparing, however, great things with small, we attain some faint notion of these exalted and invisible blessings, from the earthly and visible enjoyments of this world. In this respect, even the Holy Scriptures descend to the weakness of our capacities, and, as the Hebrews express it, "the law of God speaks the language of the children of men." They speak of this celestial life, under the representation of an heritage, of riches, of a kingdom, and a crown, but with uncommon epithets, and such as are by no means applicable to any earthly glory, or opulence, however great. It is an inheritance, but one that is uncorrupted, undefiled, and that fadeth not away: a kingdom, but one that can never be shaken, much less ruined.—LEIGHTON.

Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.—The four steps of the union which subsists between believers and Christ are all distinctly expressed in this prayer of our Lord. Here we have, (1.) God's purpose that the Son should give "eternal life to those whom he hath given him," v. 2. (2.) The Son's undertaking and accomplishing their redemption, in v. 4, "I have finished

the work which thou gavest me to do." (3.) The application of this union, and its performance in them by their "faith," their "believing," and "keeping his word," v. 6, 8, and in several of the subsequent verses. And then, lastly, (4.) the consummation of this union, "I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." There meet the first donation and the last.—LEIGHTON.

The soul that is in Christ, when other things are pulled away, he feels little or nothing, he cleaves to Christ, and these separations pain him not. Yea, when that great separatist, Death, comes, that breaks all other unions, even that of the soul and body, yet so far is it from separating the believer's soul from its beloved Lord Jesus, that, on the contrary, it carries it into the nearest union with him, and fullest enjoyment of him for ever.—LEIGHTON.

Doubt not then, O my soul, but thou shalt once see, besides the face of thy God, whose glory fills heaven and earth, the blessed spirits of the ancient Patriarch and prophets; the Holy Apostles and Evangelists; the glorious Martyrs and Confessors; those eminent saints, whose holiness thou wert wont to magnify; and, amongst them, those in whom nature and grace have especially interested thee: thou shalt see them, and enjoy their joy, and they thine. How often have I measured a long and foul journey to see some good friend; and digested the tediousness of the way, with the expectation of a kind entertainment, and the thought of that complacency which I should take in

so dear a presence! and yet, perhaps, when I have arrived, I have found the house disordered, one sick, another disquieted, myself indisposed: with what cheerful resolution should I undertake this my last voyage, where I shall meet my best friends, and find them perfectly happy, and myself with them!—HALL.

HYMN.

Join'd in one Spirit to our Head,
Where he appoints we go;
And still in Jesu's footsteps tread,
And spread his praise below.

Oh, may we ever walk in him,
And nothing know beside;
Nothing desire, nothing esteem,
But Jesus crucified.

Nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,
Nor life, nor death, can part
Those who, enjoying Jesu's grace,
In him are one in heart.

Soon will he wipe off ev'ry tear
On Canaan's blissful shore;
Where all who friends in Jesus are,
Shall meet to part no more.

WESLEY.

§ CCLXXI.

CHAP. XVIII. 1—11.

Judas betrayeth Jesus. The officers fall to the ground. Peter smiteth off Malchus' ear.

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which be-

5 E

trayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath : ' the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?

a Mat. xxvi. 36. Mark xiv. 32. Luke xxii. 39.—b 2 Sam. xv. 23.—c Luke xxi. 37; & xxii. 39.—d Mat. xxvi. 47. Mark xiv. 43. Luke xxii. 47. Acts i. 16.—e ch. xvii. 12.—f Mat. xxvi. 51. Mark xiv. 47. Luke xxii. 49, 50. g Mat. xx. 22; & xxvi. 30, 42.

See Matthew XXVI. 47—56.

§ LXXXV.

§ CCLXXII.

CHAP. XVIII. 12—27.

Jesus is taken, and led unto Annas and Caiaphas. Peter's denial. Jesus examined before Caiaphas.

12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

13 And ^a led him away to ^a Annas first ; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.¹

14 ^a Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 ¶ ^a And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple : that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16 ^m But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out

that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples ? He saith, I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals ; for it was cold : and they warmed themselves : and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

19 ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

20 Jesus answered him, ' I spake openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort ; and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me ? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them : behold, they know what I said.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by ^a struck Jesus ¹ with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so ?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil : but if well, why smitest thou me ?

24 'Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. 'They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it*, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again: and 'immediately the cock crew.

A See Mat. xxvi. 57.—I Luke iii. 2. | And Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas the high priest, ver. 24.—h ch. xi. 50.—I Mat. xxvi. 58. Mark xiv. 64. Luke xxii. 54.—m Mat. xxvi. 69. Mark xiv. 66. Luke xxii. 54. n Mat. xxvi. 55. Luke iv. 15. ch. vii. 14, 26, 29; & viii. 2.—o Jer. xx. 2. Acts xxiii. 2.—p Or, with a rod.—q Mat. xxvi. 57.—r Mat. xxvi. 74. Mark xiv. 72. Luke xxii. 60. ch. xiii. 38.

See Matthew XXVI. 57—75.

§ § LXXXVI. LXXXVII.

§ CCLXXIII.

CHAP. XVIII. 28—40.

The arraignment of Jesus before Pilate. His kingdom. The Jews ask Barabbas to be let loose.

28 ¶ 'Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto 'the hall of judgment: and it was early; 'and they themselves went not

into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the pass-over.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

32 * That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

33 * Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

36 ' Jesus answered, ' My kingdom is not of this world:

if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that ^ais of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, ^bI find in him no fault at all.

39 ^cBut ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 ^dThen cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. ^eNow Barabbas was a robber.

^a Mat. xxvii. 2. Mark xv. 1. Luke xxiii. 1. Acts iii. 13. ^b Or, *Pilate's House*, Mat. xxvii. 27.—^c Acts x. 28; & xi. 8.—^d Mat. xx. 19. ch. xii. 32, 33.—^e Mat. xxvii. 11.—^f 1 Tim. vi. 13.—^g Dan. ii. 44; & vii. 14. Luke xii. 14. ch. vi. 15; & viii. 15.—^h ob. viii. 47. 1 John iii. 19; & iv. 6.—ⁱ Mat. xxvii. 24. Luke xxiii. 4. ch. xix. 4, 6.—^j Mat. xxvii. 15. Mark xv. 6. Luke xxiii. 17.—^k Acts iii. 14.—^l Luke xxiii. 19.

See Matthew XXVII. 11—23.

§ LXXXIX.

§ CCLXXIV.

CHAP. XIX. 1—16.

Christ is scourged, crowned with thorns, and beaten. Pilate is desirous to release him, but, being overcome with the outrage of the Jews, he delivered him to be crucified.

THEN ^aPilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*.

2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, ^bthat ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

6 ^cWhen the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. *Pilate* saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because

he made himself the Son of God.

8 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: 'who-soever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

13 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Cæsar.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

a Mat. xx. 19; & xxvii. 26. Mark xv. 15. Luke xviii. 32.—b ch. xviii. 38. ver. 6.—c Acts iii. 13.—d Lev. xxiv. 16.—e Mat. xxvi. 65. ch. v. 18; & x. 58.—f Is. llii. 7. Mat. xxvii. 12, 14.—g Luke xxii. 53. ch. vii. 30.—h Luke xxiii. 2.—i Acts xvii. 7.—j Mat. xxvii. 62.—k Gen. xlix. 10.—l Mat. xxvii. 26, 31. Mark xv. 15. Luke xxiii. 24.

See Matthew XXVII. 24—32.

§ XC.

§ CCLXXV.

CHAP. XIX. 17—24.

Christ is crucified. The soldiers cast lots for his garments.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

19 ¶ And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many

of the Jews : for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city : and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews ; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

23 ¶ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also *his* coat : now the coat was without seam, ¹ woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, ² They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

¹ Mat. xxvii. 31, 33. Mark xv. 21, 22. Luke xxiii. 25, 33.—² Num. xv. 36. Heb. xiii. 12.—³ Mat. xxvii. 37. Mark xv. 26. Luke xxiii. 33.—⁴ Mat. xxvii. 36. Mark xv. 24. Luke xxiii. 34. ¹ Or, *wrought*.—² Ps. xlii. 13.

See Matthew XXVII. 33—38.

§ XCI.

§ CCLXXVI.

CHAP. XIX. 25—42.

Christ commendeth his mother to John. He dieth. His side is pierced. He is buried by Joseph and Nicodemus.

774

25 ¶ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of ¹ Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and ² the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, ³ Woman, behold thy son !

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her ⁴ unto his own *home*.

28 ¶ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, ⁵ that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar : and ⁶ they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, ⁷ It is finished : and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

31 The Jews therefore, ⁸ because it was the preparation, ⁹ that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first,

and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

38 ¶ And after this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where

he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

s Mat. xxvii. 55. Mark xv. 40. Luke xxiii. 49. ¶ Or, Clopas.— Luke xxiv. 18.—y ch. xiii. 29; & xx. 2; & xxi. 7, 30, 24.—z ch. ii. 4.—y ch. i. 11; & xvi. 32.—s vs. 1, 19, 21.—a Mat. xxvii. 48.—b ch. xvii. 4.—c ver. 42. Mark xv. 42.—d Deut. xxi. 23.—e 1 John v. 6, 8.—f Ex. xii. 46. Num. ix. 12. Ps. xxiv. 20.—g Ps. xxii. 16, 17. Zech. xii. 10. Rev. i. 7.—A Mat. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 42. Luke xxiii. 50.—f ch. ix. 22; & xii. 42.—A ch. iii. 1, 2; & vii. 50.—f Acts v. 6.—m Is. liii. 9.—n ver. 31.

See Matthew XXVII. 50—60.

§ § XCIII. XCIV.

§ CCLXXVII.

CHAP. XX. 1—18.

Mary cometh to the sepulchre; so do Peter and John, ignorant of the resurrection. Jesus appeareth to Mary Magdalene.

THE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth,

and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together : and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw *the linen clothes lying* ; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And *the napkin*, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the *scripture*, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 ¶ *But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping* : and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked into the sepulchre*,

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her,
776

Woman, why weepest thou ? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 ^a And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and *'knew not that it was Jesus*.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? whom seekest thou ? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni ; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not ; for I am not yet ascended to my Father : but go to ^a my brethren, and say unto them, *'I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to ^m my God, and your God*.

18 ^a Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that he had spoken these things unto her*.

^a Mat. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 1.—^b ch. xiii. 28 ; & xix. 28 ; & xxi. 7, 20, 24.—^c Luke xiv. 17.—^d ch. xix. 40.—^e ch. xi. 44.—^f Ps. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 25—31 ; & xiii. 24, 26.—^g Mark xvi. 8.—^h Mat. xxviii. 9. Mark xvi. 9.—ⁱ Luke xxiv. 16, 31. ch. xxi. 4.—^k Ps. xxii. 22. Mat. xxviii. 10. Rom. viii. 29. Heb. ii. 11.—^l ch. xvi. 22.—^m Eph. i. 17.—ⁿ Mat. xxviii. 10. Luke xxiv. 10.

See Matthew XXVIII. 1—10.

§ XCV.

§ CCLXXVIII.

CHAP. XX. 19—31.

Jesus appeareth to his disciples. The incredulity and confession of Thomas. The Scripture is sufficient to salvation.

19 ¶: Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

24 ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said

5 G

unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 ¶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen and *yet* have believed.

30 ¶ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

o Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 36. 1 Cor. xv. 5.—p ch. xvi. 22.—q Mat. xviii. 18, ch. xvii. 18, 19. Heb. iii. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 2.—r Mat. x. 19; & xviii. 18.—s ch. xi. 16.—t 1 John i. 1.—u 2 Cor. v. 7. 1 Pet. i. 8.—v ch. xxi. 26.—y Luke i. 4.—z ch. iii. 16, 16; & v. 24. 1 Pet. i. 9.

See Matthew XXVIII. 11—17.

§ XCVI; and Luke XXIV. 36.

§ CCXLII.

§ CCLXXIX.

CHAP. XXI. 1—25.

Christ appearing again to his disciples, was known of them by the great draught of fishes. He dineth with them: earnestly commandeth Peter to feed his lambs and sheep; foretelleth him of his death; rebuketh his curiosity touching John. The conclusion.

AFTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and ^eNathanael of Cana in Galilee, and ^bthe *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples ^cknew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then ^dJesus saith unto

778

them, ¹Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, ^eCast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore ^fthat disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, ^gCome *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him,

ST. JOHN XXI. 1—25.

Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old,

thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could

not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

a ch. i. 45.—b Mat. iv. 21.—c ch. xx. 14.—d Luke xxiv. 41. || Or, *Sirs.*—e Luke v. 4, 6, 7.—f ch. xiii. 23; & xx. 2.—g Acts x. 41.—h See ch. xx. 19, 26.—i Acts xx. 28. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 26; & v. 2, 4.—k ch. ii. 24, 26; & xvi. 30.—l ch. xiii. 36. Acts xii. 3. 4.—m 2 Pet. i. 14.—n ch. xiii. 24, 25; & xx. 2.—o Mat. xvi. 27, 28; & xxv. 31. 1 Cor. iv. 5; & xi. 26. Rev. ii. 25; & iii. 11; & xxii. 7, 20.—p ch. xix. 36. 3 John 12.—q ch. xx. 30.—r Amos vii. 10.

READER.—*Lovest thou me?* In all love, three things are necessary; 1st. Some goodness in the object, either true and real, or apparent and seeming to be so: for the soul, be it never so evil, can affect nothing but what it takes some way to be good. 2nd. There must be a knowledge of that goodness; for the most excellent things, if altogether unknown, affect not. 3rd. There must be a suitableness or agreement of that good thing with the nature of those, which should affect it; otherwise indeed, how good soever it is, it is not good to them.—LEIGHTON.

Let me beseech you strictly to examine your own souls, enquire what it is that they chiefly wish, hope and desire; whether they give chase as it were to every painted fly; whether, "forsaking the fountain of living waters," they are digging for themselves "cisterns" of clay, and these leaky too, with great and unprofitable labour. O wretched deceitfulness of every earthly hope, which mocks and deludes us so much the more in proportion to the extravagance of its promises! Blessed are they and only they, who fix their eyes and their souls above, and say with the Psalmist, "Lord, I wait on thee, my soul doth wait, and in thy word do I trust:" and as elsewhere, "and now, Lord, what wait I for,

780

my hope is in thee." Happy they who have quitted all those low desires and pursuits, which are unworthy of a generous and immortal spirit, and have fixed their love on one: whose heart and hopes are set upon that one, in whom all things excellent meet and centre. A cheerful joy always shines on their face, nor do their cheeks glow with the shame of repulse and disappointment. While we are wandering hither and thither, in the vicious and perplexed pursuit of flattering objects; what frequent lamentation, what fond complaint of delusive fortune, and the tragical outcry of grievous and painful wounds! What crowds of fears and cares divide the mind, and hurry it now one way and now another! But when we fix our hope and our heart on the only support, on the only true and all sufficient good, all is safe, and the soul treads firm as it were while the whole globe trembles. Let external things be borne this way or that, there is peace within; nor, when all methods have been examined, can any other be found for the establishment of the mind, than that it should lay all its stress upon the one immoveable and immutable rock.—LEIGHTON.

Blessed soul that can say, Lord, thou seest that I desire nothing but thyself, (as Peter said, Lord, thou knowest I love thee,) all the corners of my heart stand open in thy sight, thou seest if there be any other desire or expectation but to please thee; and if there be any such thing in me, (for I see it not,) I pray thee, discover it to me, and through thy

grace it shall lodge no longer. My heart is thine alone, it is consecrated to thee, and if anything would profane thy temple, if it will not go forth by fair warning, let it be scourged out by thy rod, yea, any rod whatsoever it pleaseth thee to choose!—LEIGHTON.

Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep.—The great principle of fidelity and diligence and good success in the great work of the ministry is love; and the great spring of love to souls, is love to him that bought them. He knew it well himself and gave us to know it, when he said, Simon, lovest thou me? feed my sheep! feed my lambs! Deep impressions of his blessed name upon our hearts, will not fail to produce lively expressions of it, not only in our words and discourses in private and public, but will make the whole track of our lives to be a true copy and transcript of his holy life; and if this be within us, any sparks of that Divine love, you know, the best way, not only to preserve them, but to excite them and blow them up into a flame, is by

the breath of prayer. Oh prayer! the converse of the soul with God, the breath of God in man returning to its original, frequent and fervent prayer, the better half of our whole work, and that which makes the other half lively and effectual, as that holy company tells us, when, designing deacons to serve the tables, they add, "but we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and the ministry of the word."—LEIGHTON.

HYMN.

Hark, my soul, it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour; hear his word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
Say, poor sinner, Lov'st thou me?

I deliver'd thee when bound,
And, when wounded, heal'd thy wound;
Sought thee wand'ring, set thee right,
Turn'd thy darkness into light.

Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be;—
Say, poor sinner, Lov'st thou me?

Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is weak and faint:
Yet I love thee and adore;
Oh for grace to love thee more!

COWPER.

THE END.





